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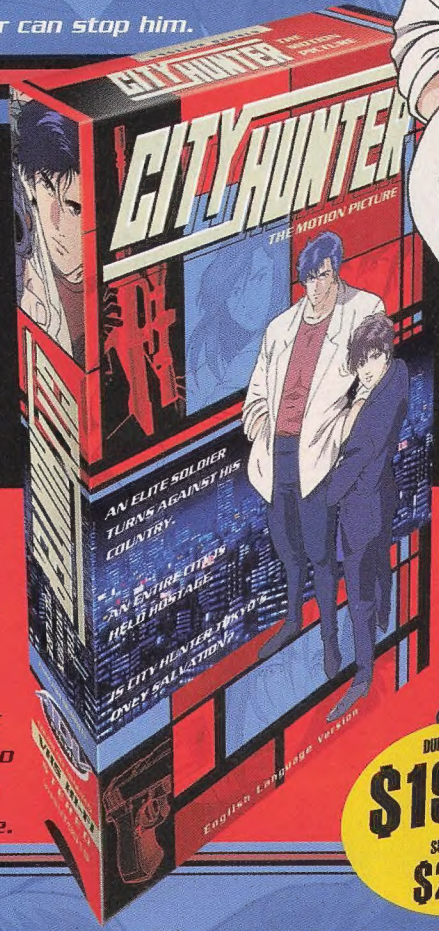

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WIZARD contents

THE COMICS MAGAZINE • NUMBER 95 • JULY 1999

HEY, OVER HERE!

Tying into our celebratory, year-long countdown to the new millennium, *Wizard* looks toward the future in each 1999 issue. Flip to **page 46** for our Summer Preview Guide, counting down the future of your favorite comics as the millennium quickly approaches. Then jump to **page 68** for the latest word on the movie event of 2000: "The X-Men."

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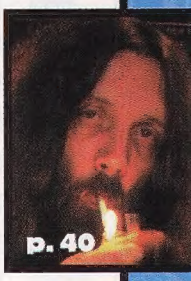

ON THE COVERS

To get the dirt on this summer's R-rated **"South Park"** movie (left), drop the cheesy poofs and flip to **page 36. The X-Men** (right) were painted by Alex Ross. To get the skinny on what's happenin' to Marvel's merry mutants (and all your other favorite comic characters), check out our Summer Preview Guide on **page 46.** And to get the dope on the live-action "X-Men" movie, hop to **page 68.**

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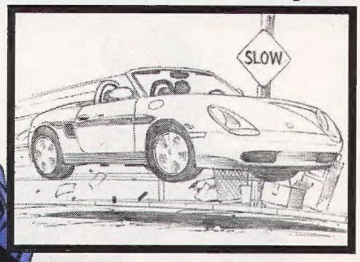

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PUBLISHER'S LETTER

"I'M NOT USED TO HOLDING SOMETHING SO BIG."

CINEMANIA

There are three movies I just can't wait to see—and I haven't felt this way about that many movies in a long time. Yes, there's always a movie I've gotta see, but never three at once. Now we have "Star Wars," "South Park," and "Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me."

Here are my predictions for "Star Wars" (I'm writing this column weeks before the movie will be released):

1. I will have seen the movie at least three times (if I can get tickets).
2. "Star Wars" will gross more than "Titanic" did—in half the time.
3. My wife will see it twice.
4. I will have at least 100 new toys in my office.
5. The movie will be great!

Of course, "South Park" is going to be funny, especially because they can do stuff in movies they can't do on TV. This month, Cartman, our favorite South Park kid, graces the cover.

And don't forget Austin Powers, who graced the cover of last month's *Wizard*. I've heard the movie is incredibly funny from sources I can trust. No doubt I will own the video when it comes out!

And boy, not only are we going to get some great movies, but also some great toys, which is the best part of all!

When you're not watching movies, of course, the only thing to do is read comics. That's why in this issue, our summer preview guide tells you everything you want to know about all the hot comics coming up. If that's not enough great info for you, we've also got a ton of sneak peeks at upcoming comics, like Alex Ross' latest project and the new sequel to *Batman: The Long Halloween*. Then turn to our great interview with spook-master and comics legend Alan Moore—he'll cast a spell on you. We also give you the scoop on "South Park" right from the mouths of creators Matt Stone and Trey Parker!

Still not satisfied? Check out our great *Undertaker* #1/2 offer! Wrestling is hot, and it's only getting hotter!

See ya!

Gareb Shamus

P.S. I'm still alive and doing quite well.

P.P.S. Make plans for Wizard World Chicago! Check out our promo ads in this and next month's issue. We have an incredible lineup of guests, including many great first appearances!

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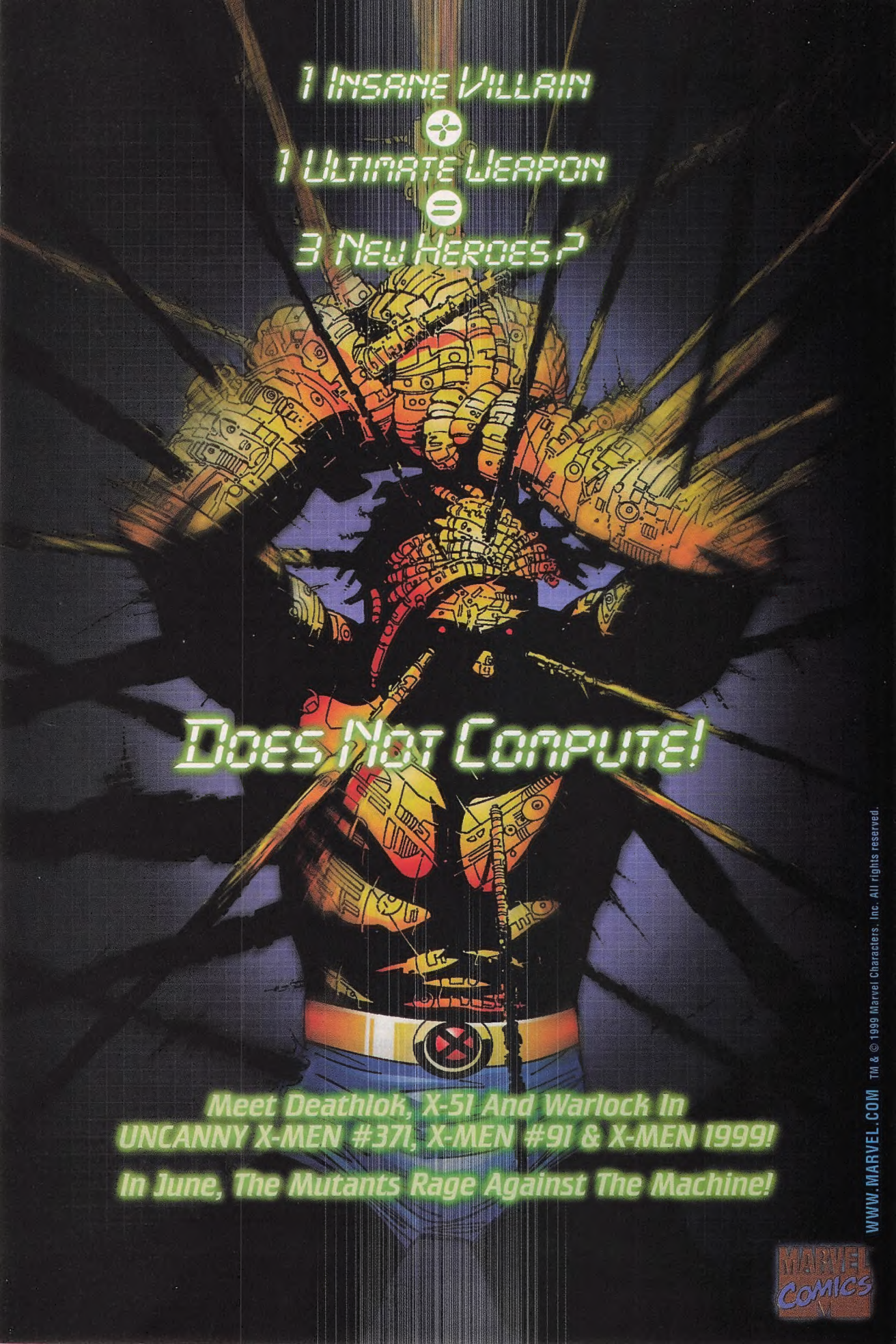
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MAGIC WORDS

SLEEPING WITH HAN SOLO... ALEX ROSS REJECTS $300,000... ...AND A COUPLE OF SIX-PACKS!

Lucky you.

It's one of those months where we've got a bountiful bevy of creator quotes, tasty tidbits of intellectual insights and 53 pulsating pounds of fascinating facts...and there's *still* room for a cheap monkey joke or two. The upshot? My introductory blather is kept to a minimum. Suffice it to say that I want to make love to you all. Now get readin'.

Dear Jim,

Every month I slavishly purchase *X-Men* and *Uncanny X-Men*, immediately scouring them for a glimpse, sighting or mention of Psylocke, my favorite cold-hearted, British, ninja telepath. But she's never there. Am I wasting my time?

Rob Beadle
South Wales, U.K.

In the X-books? Yeah. But that doesn't mean your life has to be Psylocke-free. "Psylocke fans rejoice!" Marvel information czar Bill Rosemann tells us. "The British über-ninja will be kicking tail and breaking hearts in this summer's *Contest of Champions II* mini-series!" *CoC II* should be a showcase for the many Marvel heroes not currently featured in a book.

And in the meantime, Rosemann thinks ya might read the X-books for more than just Psylocke. "I mean, Alan Davis! Adam Kubert!" he says. "I'd read a comic about monkeys if they did it...but then again, I like monkeys."

Hey, who doesn't like monkeys?

Yo Jimbo,

Can you give me an update on two of my favorite Silver Age artists, Carmine Infantino and Gil Kane? I haven't seen anything from either of them in quite some time.

Simon Westwell
Blackburn, Lancashire, U.K.

Two updates, hot 'n' fresh:

Carmine Infantino, who helped create the Silver Age with his relaunch of the Flash in 1956, is out of the comic biz. "I don't do comics anymore," he says. "I've actually turned stuff down. I've just reached a point where I don't think I have anything left to say there." But if you're still starved for Infantino art, ya might cast a glance in the direction of Playing Mantis' recent re-release of the classic Captain Action toys. Infantino did the art for the packaging.

Gil Kane, who did about 53 kajillion Atom and Green Lantern books in the '60s, is still around, although he considers himself "semi-retired." Kane just finished drawing a two-part Atom/GL story for *Legends of the DC Universe*; issue numbers aren't determined yet, but the story will probably see print in late 1999. He's also working on a Superman graphic novel.

Hey, that's not a bad output for ol' Gil! Maybe those Cliffhanger guys oughtta get "semi-retired."

SOMETIMES FAIRY TALES BITE BACK

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BUNNY AWARD

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Jim takes his favorite letter and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize.

Yo McLauchlin,

In *Wizard* #94's "Magic Words," you claimed that *Wizard* staff band the Poogtastics are having trouble because "they're too damn lazy and have no drummer." Well, it's bad enough we have to look at your bad haircut and hear your stories about Mrs. McGillicuddy from ol' St. Paul every day, but now you have the audacity to insult the one true *Wizard* house band? The Poogtastics are alive and kickin', and we demand a formal apology! Rock on!

The Poogtastics
Brian Cunningham, Dan DiGiacomo, Andrew Kardon and Tom Root
New City, NY

P.S. If you're lookin' for your ears to bleed, just download our practice sessions through the ToyFare link at www.wizardworld.com. Beeyotch!

Readers suffering from any sort of post-traumatic stress disorder that has resulted in a constant, annoying ringing in their ears are encouraged to try the Poogtastics. If their bleatings don't get that noise out of your head (and probably replace it with a new annoying noise), nothing will.

Your apology is forthcoming, pending your actually doing something with some harmony to it.

Beeyotch, indeed.

Dear Wiz,

Your magazine is always helpful in letting me know what's hot and what's not in the price guide. But how come you never list Robotech comics? And what book is Adam Warren going to do next?

Bryan Raker
Roswell, GA

When tough answers are needed for the hard questions, we turn to our very own price-guide guru, Lars Pearson: "One word: space," the Norwegian Assassin says. "We've only got room these days for 43 pages of price guide, so we have to make some judgment calls about what's in there. To be included, it's best if books a) have some market activity, b) have some reference value, or c) have such an overwhelming demand from readers that we are forced to knuckle under and list them. Nice as *Robotech* is, it doesn't meet any of these criteria, and the comic's following in the United States is very small. But if demand were to pick up, we'd list it."

And believe it or not, manga master Adam Warren's next book is...*Battle Chasers*?! Yep. Warren is writing and drawing a backup story for *BC* #6, which should (oh, how we hope!!!) hit stands by June 1. After that, the ever-exploitive Mr. Warren will write a two-issue fill-in on *Gen*^{13} #43-#44 titled "The Savage Breast" before hopefully moving into a new Dirty Pair mini-series from Dark Horse Comics.

Dear Jim,

1) What's going on with writer/artist Mike Mignola?

I know he just did the *Batman/Hellboy/Starman* crossover, but what are his future plans for Hellboy?

2) What's going on with Joe Madureira's Nickelodeon cartoon "Blast"? Is it still in the works?

3) Jim, you're a god. How can I be more like you?

Jason Mikula
alphatoxin@hotmail.com

1) Next up for Mignola is *Hellboy: Box of Evil*, a two-issue Dark Horse Comics mini-series launching in August. Mignola will also be doing spot illustrations for a book tentatively titled *Hellboy: Odd Jobs*, a collection of Hellboy prose stories by a butt-load of different writers.

2) Like most things movie-related, "Blast," the story of a boy next door who just happens to be a living robot weapon, is progressing rather slowly. Joe Madureira, hurriedly preparing *Battle Chasers* #6, could not be reached for comment. But his partner in crime, *Coven* writer and screenwriter Jeph Loeb, could. "We have turned a draft in to Nickelodeon and they're happy with it," Loeb says. "They're looking forward to the next step, which is an animated short, before we do a live-action feature. We're shooting for summer 2000." Keep checking "Coming Attractions" in this very mag for more merry missives about "Blast" in the future.

3) First, find inner peace and balance. Then get a bad haircut, learn more baseball trivia than you thought humanly possible, hit on anything in a skirt, and take no crap from man, woman, child or small mammal. And learn not to bother trying to get a hold of Joe Madureira when he's hurriedly preparing *Battle Chasers* #6.

Dear Jim,

I know you always get letters about screenwriter/comic writer Kevin Smith, but you never seem to mind getting them answered. Can you get these answered?

1) Is "Rick Derris" a real person? If so, did he score with all the girls Kevin Smith knew?

BUNNY PHOTO: PAUL SCHERALDI

HEY! IT'S PEN PALS...

Send your name, address, age, sex and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address at the end of this column (put your age on the envelope). The only way to get your Internet address listed instead is to post your info in the Pen Pals board on America Online's "Wizard World" forum (keyword: Wizard; look in the Wizard Bulletin Board, under Message Boards). **Pre-'98 entrants:** Please resend your entries.

2) Does the Quick Stop sell Slurpees? How 'bout Yoo-Hoo?

3) How did Smith link up with Jim Mahfood? He's my favorite new artist!

4) What new comics does Kevin Smith dig? The world wants to know!

Frank Estrada
frnk2000@yahoo.com

I sure can.

1) Even though many characters from Smith's films—like Walt Flanagan and Jason Mewes—are real, noted ladies' man Rick Derris is not. "He's more of an archetype," Smith says. "He's the every-stud in high school who was rumored to have nailed, like, everybody—maybe even your mom."

2) Smith actually worked at Quick Stop, the store made famous in "Clerks," so he oughtta know: no Slurpees. "But we did go through gallons of Yoo-Hoo every day," he says.

3) Mahfood, who's provided art on two Clerks one-shots, was brought to Smith's attention by publisher Oni Press. "They urged me to let him do Clerks, and thankfully, I listened. Jim is great."

4) Smith, who's written *Daredevil* (vol. 2) #1-#8, says, "I'm a big fan of *Daredevil*—especially the first eight issues. I also love *Preacher*, *Inhumans*, the Mark Millar-penned *Superman Adventures*, the Ty Templeton-written *Gotham Adventures* (the only true Batman book, for my money) and, of course, Grant Morrison's *JLA*."

Dear Magic Words,

Any chance of getting Kevin Smith to do an X-Men mini-series or one-shot?

Matt Trudel
lmabud12oz@aol.com

If he did, it would probably sell 5.3 metric tons worth of copies. But the answer is...probably not. "You'll never meet a bigger non-X-fan than me," Smith says. "Never dug 'em, and I probably never will. But I'll be first in line for the movie, no doubt."

Hola,

Place yer bets! In this corner, I got "Preacher" Jesse Custer! He's been awake for 147 hours and is hopped up on Fruitopia. Sitting on his shoulders is a midget whose sole purpose in life is beating Jesse over the head with a stick!

And in the other corner, in peak physical condition, having trained for months and had no comic appearances to distract him, is Acclaim Comics super-spy, Ninjak!

Serving as referee for this bout is none other than the Godfather of Soul, singer James Brown! Who wins?

Scott Reeves
Barnwell, SC

James Brown.

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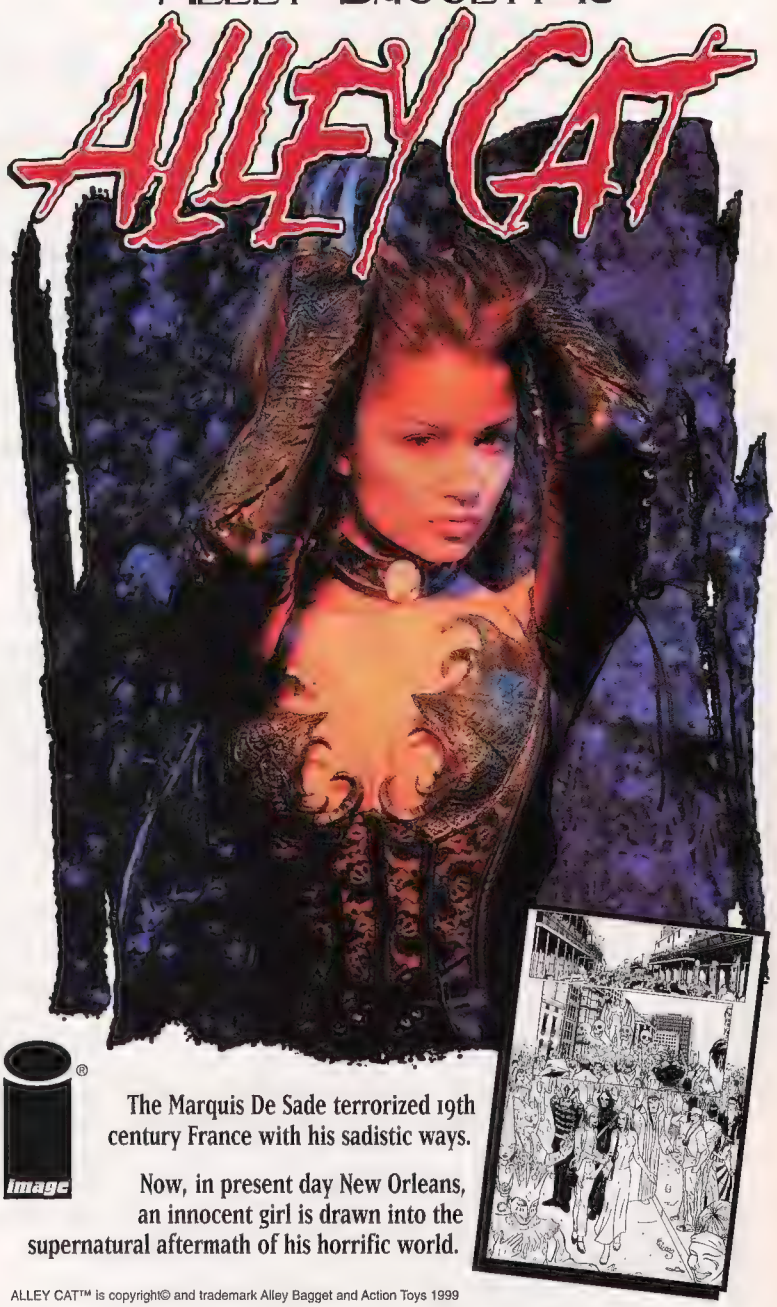

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Dear Wizard,

The other day I was delighted to receive a set of Star Wars bedsheets. I couldn't believe that they were actually full-size sheets! I know that novelty sheets often come in twin sizes for little kids, but this was excellent! Anyway, as I was looking forward to getting under the covers with Harrison Ford, I was shocked to discover that Han Solo was nowhere to be found. The sheets included pictures of Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Darth Vader, and even a friggin' Sand Person, but no Han! My brother assumes it's some kind of copyright problem. Any information on why there's no Han Solo on my sheets?

Linda Halder
Lmhalder@aol.com

Ah, nothing says delight like "getting under the covers with Harrison Ford."

Anyhoo, Steve Sansweet, the ultimate all-things-Star Wars collector whom LucasFilm eventually had to hire just 'cause he knows so damn much...isn't sure. "Unless I know if the sheets are old or new," he says, "I couldn't tell you for sure why there's no Harrison Ford. I would assume it was just an artist's design decision not to include him." Sansweet also provides this crucial information: Han Solo's likeness is found on all Star Wars reversible pillowcases (Yay!), and good ol' Harry Ford will continue to appear on all classic Star Wars merchandise.

So it looks like you still have a chance to cuddle up with Han.

Hey Wizard,

How much would Alex Ross charge me to have him paint an 8-foot by 30-foot mural on the side of my house?

Steven "Madman" Mitchell
El Cerrito, CA

Hey, kids! It's time for "Fun with Math!" So let's break out the calculator and see how far we can all go into debt! C'mon, the government does it all the time! Just follow the bouncing decimal point!

Painter Supreme Alex Ross gets in the neighborhood of $2,000 to $3,000 per cover—let's just say $2,500 on average. And that's for a 1-foot by 2-foot original. Multiply that figure by 120, for your 240-square-foot area, and you get...$300,000. So if yer name ain't "Donald Trump," you'd better start sellin' yer plasma (or just go with aluminum siding).

But don't expect Alex to come runnin' if ya do. "For $300,000, I still wouldn't do it," he says. "I've made a lot of money, and I'm comfortable. Money doesn't make that big of a difference to me. I just want to do things I think are cool. I have too many other things on my plate that I really want to do. I won't trade time for money." So you can put away that checkbook, unless Ross develops an interest in murals. And even then, you can wait in line. "If I ever wanted to do that," Ross says, "I guess I'd do my own house first."

Jim,

You mentioned in back in the "Magic Words" column in *Wizard* #92 that many folk have been sending in mail regarding monkeys, due in no small part to your corruptive influence and monkey-driven agenda. Well, I once sent you a letter regarding monkeys. However, my letter also concerned botulism. How many letters per month do you get on botulism?

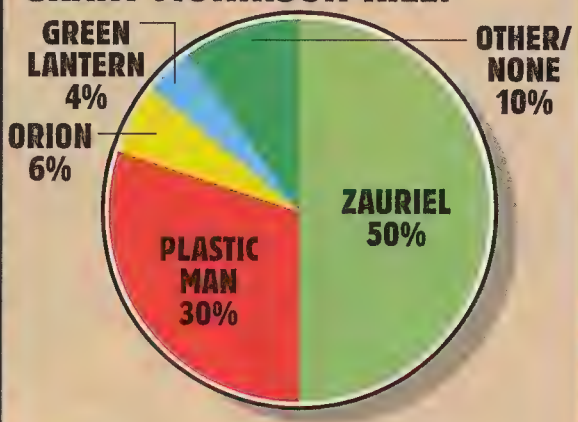
Rob Hackney
drevil@wantree.com.au

This month? Just one.

ONLINE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

SURVEY SAYS

WHICH JLA MEMBER WILL GRANT MORRISON KILL?



Guess angels aren't under divine protection after all. Grant Morrison's soon to be leaving *JLA* with a bang, and he's not going alone: A JLAer is gonna buy it in his "Mageddon" final storyline. In our on-line poll on www.wizardworld.com, 50 percent of participants lined up the heavenly agent, Zauriel, as the cast member they felt was most likely to croak. "Not only is he the least-fleshed-out character, he's also the only character created specifically for the JLA," stated one respondent. Many also stated it would make a great opening to bring Hawkman back.

Plastic Man bounced into the second-place bull's-eye with 30 percent; people claimed his innate uselessness as the main reason. "Plastic Man. Come on, 'Plastic Man!' It could only be worse if he was 'Tupperware Dude,'" moaned one voter.

As for the four percent who want Green Lantern to go, every single one of them saw it as a great way to bring Hal Jordan back—proving again that there are still people who haven't dealt with Hal's death yet. C'mon guys, get over it. ■ NACHIE CASTRO

JOSH CONNER	DAVID JAWORSKI	JOEY "ORION" KENNEDY	ASIM HAIDEN	EDWIN CAMPOS	CALEB SOWERS	AARON CASY
Age: 10 Sex: M	Age: 16 Sex: M	Age: 19 Sex: M	Age: NA Sex: NA	Age: 17 Sex: M	Age: 14 Sex: M	Age: 13 Sex: M
1237 Kirby Circle	W. 247 510395 Center Dr.	31 W. Grandview Ave.	3478 Paradise Rd., Apt. 109	5 Seabury St.	9220 St. Nicholas Drive	Rt. 4 Box 199
Bel Air, MD 21015	Mukwanago, WI 53149	Sierra Madre, CA 91024	Las Vegas, NV 59109-2776	Hempstead, NY 11550	Streetsboro, OH 44241	Linden, TN 37096
Likes: WWF, WCW, *Spawn*	Likes: Morbius, Venom, *X-Men*	Likes: Batman, *Captain America*, anime/manga	Likes: Anything cool	Likes: *The Darkness*, anime, manga, ADV films	Likes: Batman, *Gambit*, *Thunderbolts*	Likes: *Green Lantern*, Tomb Raider, *Flash*

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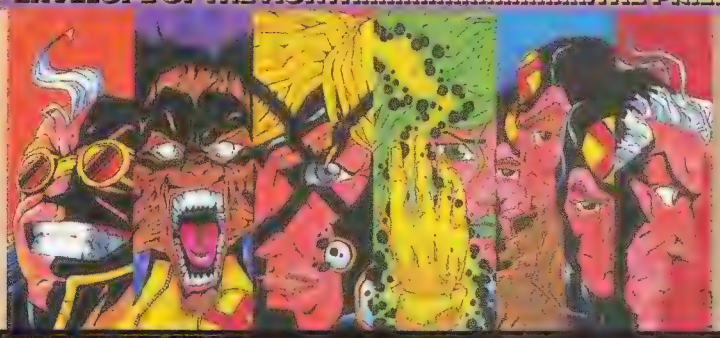
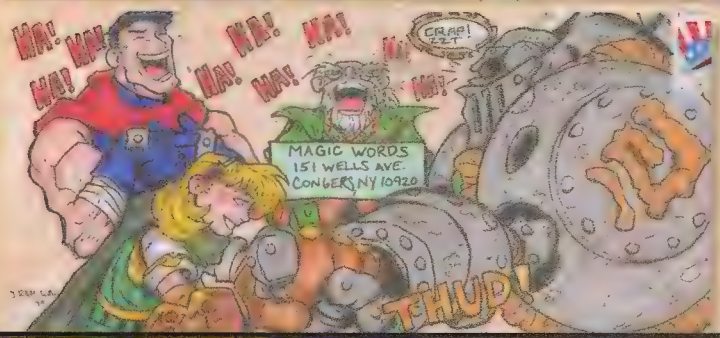
LETTER ART

Each fan who has his letter art printed this month wins a copy of *Dr. Strange* #3 signed by Jimmy Palmiotti, plus a copy of this month's issue of *Wizard* signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff! The talented creator of this month's best envelope will win a signed *Dr. Strange* #3 as well as an original page of art from *Dr. Strange* #3 by Jimmy Palmiotti. (Prizes for this contest have been generously donated by Jimmy Palmiotti, who is an excellent tracer.) Artists: Please include a clearly printed return address and a list of characters depicted on the back of the envelope. Now go see "Star Wars" for the 17th time!

ENVELOPE OF THE MONTH.....THE PRIZE



OLD X-FACTOR Ian Anthony Li, Seattle, WA



BATTLE CHASERS Emerson P. Ramiscal, Kapolei, HI

SPIDER-MAN Les Parsons, Verdun, Que. Canada

AUSTIN VS. INVISIBLES Sam Klein, Sannergata, Norway

Dear Wizards,

In the *Wizard* #92 "Magic Words" column, you printed a letter from a reader asking what it would take to get Superman drunk. Your answer quoted Maureen McTigue, Superman assistant editor, who said nothing of Earth could get Clark Kent drunk.

I respectfully submit that Ms. McTigue's answer is not complete. Remember *Adventures of Superman* #500? Superman was "dead," but on the spiritual plane, Pa Kent (who was having a near-death experience) told Clark that maybe for Kryptonians, death was different. Maybe they don't die, and maybe the only reason Clark was dead was because he thought of himself as human.

If this is the case, Clark's belief system—the same system that made him naturally assume he was dead—would also accept that drinking alcohol would make him drunk. I submit that regular ol' Earthly alcohol can get Superman drunk, because he believes it can.

Of course, Superman would probably never touch the stuff—he knows he's very powerful and would be afraid of losing control. But the letter asked if he could get drunk, not if he would get drunk.

What can get Superman drunk? The best answer to this question: a couple of six-packs.

Kurt Friedman
Silver Spring, MD

Y'know, as time goes by, I tend to think the best answer to every question is "a couple of six-packs."

And there's at least one o' them six-packs with my name on it waiting at home, making this a good time to sign off. So until next month, I remain...

—Jim McLauchlin

Jim McLauchlin looks for the good in everyone he meets, and if he can't find it, he kills them.

Send letters to:
Magic Words
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920
or e-mail us at JMcLauch@aol.com

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...just ask the girls!
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™
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SPOILER WARNING
THIS STORY REVEALS KEY PLOT POINTS TO *FLASH* #150, ON SALE RIGHT NOW! READ AT YER OWN RISK, BUCKO!

FAST BREAK

Will a new-look, fresh-attitude Flash be a runaway success or get stuck in his tracks?

Look out, *Flash* fans: life has just hit the fast lane. With the apparent death of the Flash, a.k.a. Wally West, in this month's *Flash* #150, a new "fastest man alive" hits the DC Universe, sparking massive changes starting in July's *Flash* #152 (issue #151 is a flashback story starring West in his Kid Flash days). "A major makeover—new logo, new place to live, new suit," said *Flash* co-writer Mark Waid. "And perhaps, even a new Flash."

Perhaps? This darker Flash sure does look new. Garbed in a sleek, black suit, he shows up moments after West joins the mystical "Speed Force," where all super-speedsters end up when they die.

"Wally's final fate is unknown [to the rest of the cast]," said *Flash* co-writer Brian Augustyn. "This black-suited man shows up to take over the role that Wally West played. If he is Wally, or if he knows what happened to him, he's not saying."

Who could this new Flash be? He's described as "older" than West in #152. And in issue #150, it's hinted that the time-hopping Silver Age Flash, a.k.a. Barry Allen, might learn of West's death and try to save him before Allen's own demise (he died saving the universe in 1985's *Crisis on Infinite Earths* #8). Could our new mystery Flash be Allen? "I have to admit that's a logical assumption," Augustyn admitted. "But does that mean that's the answer? We'll let everyone know in the proper time frame."

Does this direction sound somewhat familiar? Fans will recall the last time DC replaced a veteran hero with a new one in the controversial new direction of Green Lantern in 1994. In that tale, DC supplanted longtime Lantern Hal Jordan with a younger Kyle Rayner, rocketing *Green Lantern* to the publisher's third-best-selling book. Is this an attempt to spark controversy like *Green Lantern*?

"Only in the most basic sense that that's what comics should do—spark readers' interest," said Augustyn. "The big difference is with Green Lantern, it was apparent very early on that he was the new guy. With this, it's set up as a mystery, and it deepens as the story goes on."

But, like *Green Lantern*, is *Flash*'s swap for keeps?

"I would say that whenever these things happen, they're forever," said Augustyn. "Our intent is that the change *is* the change. The mystery man behind the

FLASH DANCE The new Flash is a maniac, a maniac on the floor.

lightning is here to stay."

Which brings up a few questions. Here's what Waid and Augustyn will spill:

AFFILIATION? The mystery Flash will remain a member of both the JLA and the Titans, after showing his face to Superman and Donna Troy, respectively. "They clearly recognize him," co-writer Waid said. "And they're willing to trust him. But that still leaves a lot of unanswered questions as to just who he is."

GOT THE RUNS Feets, don't fail me now.

POWERS? Waid is purposefully vague here, playing up the mystery. "He shows signs of having familiar Flash powers, but he'll show signs of unfamiliar powers, too," he said. One such sign, in #152, has this new Flash steal speed away from things instead of just being able to share it.

VILLAINS? Two new baddies—the Folded Man and Replicant—are on the horizon. "The Folded Man has a suit that allows him to travel between dimensions—making it virtually impossible to lay a hand on him," Waid said. And Augustyn explained the Replicant as "the 21st century Rogue. He replicates powers of the old Flash's rogues gallery. He has the powers of Captain Cold, the Weather Wizard, Heatwave, Dr. Alchemy and the Mirror Master."

The ongoing Flash mystery will play out all through the DC Universe, with a promised resolution. "Until it's over, we won't know just what the status quo is in the book," Augustyn said. "Yes, this person is the Flash. Yes, he's a hero. But that's all we'll know at first. And I don't know precisely where—probably six to eight months down the road—there will be an end. The mystery as to who he is will be revealed." ■ CHRIS HUTCHINS AND JIM McLAUCHLIN

Scientific breakthrough validates schoolyard myth: "Man... all they warned me about was palms," lamented heavily follicled teen moments before he was swept away in a sea of his own fluids.

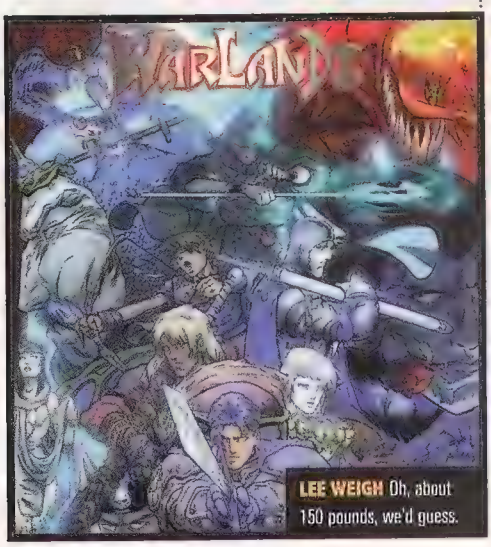
Gary Reese blows best-of-three Magic tournament against chicken, dooms humanity in its age-old war against poultry. "I... I just thought it was a game. I'm sorry... so sorry," sobbed the harbinger of mankind's destruction before being butchered and having his ass filled with stuffing.

NOT STANDING PAT

Hotshot Lee introduces two new Image Comics

Fans of Americanized manga are gonna get a double whammy at summer's end. That's when hotshot artist Pat Lee (*Darkminds*) and his Dreamwave Studios troupe premiere two new Eastern-flavored series through Image Comics: August's *Neon Cyber*, and September's *Warlands: Bloodrites*.

Neon Cyber is an eight-issue prequel to *Darkminds* that explores the Neon Dragon gang's underground rise to power. "Readers will still see the dark, cyberpunk feel in this book," said Adrian Tsang, who co-plots and scripts all Dreamwave productions, "but it will be a lot grittier than its predecessor. *Neon Cyber* is less about justice and more about survival." The mini-series is drawn by Dreamwave bullpenner Lou Kang.

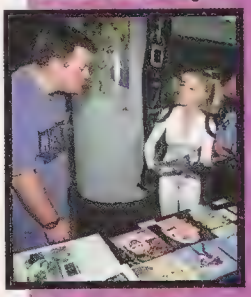


LEE WEIGH Oh, about 150 pounds, we'd guess.

Meanwhile, *Warlands: Bloodrites*, a 12-issue series, marks Dreamwave's first foray into the fantasy world. Lee, who is drawing the series, likened its style to that of a roleplaying game. "*Warlands* will have the same feel as *Dungeons & Dragons*," said Lee, "with a whiplash of Japanese anime."

Bloodrites' first issue introduces the central team of adventurers—a human soldier, a female elf, a wizard and his young apprentice—and their quest to find the Darklyte, an armor that bestows mysterious powers to whoever wields it. A nation of vampires and clan of demons are meanwhile in similar pursuit of the armor, so count on a smattering of mystically-waged warfare in the *Magic: the Gathering* vein.

"One thing I love about *Warlands*, though, is that there are hordes of characters," said Lee. "It allows me to create as many characters I want." ■ DEAN SIMAKIS



Comic geeks all hit puberty at once, killing 17 at local con. "One second they were all giggling nervously, then boom! I was picking scraps of a Gambit T-shirt out of my cleavage," said last girl ever to attend a con.

'ASTONISHING X-MEN' COVER-UP

Mini-series vows to be big, but creators are sworn to secrecy

The folks at Marvel Comics are hiding something. Something big. It's a three-issue *Astonishing X-Men* mini-series, debuting in July.

That's about all Marvel wants you to know about it—and they're approaching conspiracy-like proportions to keep it that way. Writer Howard Mackie (*Mutant X*) and penciler Brandon Peterson (*Magneto Rex*) have been ordered not to talk about the project. In fact, Mackie didn't know some of the story's twists until a week before he scripted it.

Astonishing is big, that's for damn sure. But how big? "If you don't read this series, you're missing the start of something huge," editor Mark Powers said. "There will be major ramifications, and not just for the characters in the story. This is going to launch our X-Men storyline for the rest of the year."

So what's the fuss about? Founding X-Members Cyclops and Phoenix call an "emergency meeting" of the X-Men after they learn of a threat that endangers the Mannites, a new race spotlighted in last year's "Hunt for Xavier" storyline. A special team of mutants will be formed to battle the menace.

As the story progresses, the Mannite problem will escalate into something much more dangerous, Powers said. A new villain will be introduced in the story. "He's going to have a major, major impact," Powers said. "He lays the groundwork for the end-of-the-year storyline."

And which X-Men are going to be on this special team? "I'll only say that Cyclops and Phoenix are on the roster," Powers said. "But some of the characters who'll be picked will definitely shock you." ■ CH

HEAD COUNT Two X-Men and a lot of head.

THEBUZZBIN

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY

RE-'KNIGHT'ED? Negotiations between Marvel Comics and the Joe Quesada-Jimmy Palmiotti tag-team for a second year of "Marvel Knights" are *this* close to being finalized. Word on the street says that when the deal goes down, "Batman: No Man's Land" writer Bob Gale will hop the Knights train, and a couple high-profile DC writers will come with him.

NEW JLAer! Things continue to move and shake on DC's flagship team. The latest? Looks like *JLA: Superpower*, a fall one-shot, will introduce a *new* team member.

ROSS GOES LARGE! Ya loved super-painter Alex Ross and animation master Paul Dini on DC's tabloid-size *Superman: Peace on Earth*. Now word is that Ross and Dini are lookin' to team on a project of similar size for Marvel in 2000!

FUTURE MARVELS! The buzz at Marvel these days is about "The Buzz," a new character who'll be popping up soon. The rumor mill tells us that the Buzz will debut via a new book tentatively titled *Marvel First Look*, where new characters will make their premieres.

THE RETURN OF HAL? The working title for DC's *Day of Judgment* crossover was "Hell on Earth." But around the offices, many staffers referred to it as "Hal on Earth." Could it be that much-beloved Green Lantern Hal Jordan will return from the dead? Could be.

HAL'S RETURN?

FOREIGN LEGION! DC's two "Legion of Super-Heroes" books are entering foreign territory, as the old creative teams have been fired. New creators should be announced soon, and Legionophiles can also look forward to a Legion-Titans crossover mini-series in 2000.

THEYSAIDIT

IDLE CHATTER

"I've never been so happy to be canned. Every month, I'd run full speed and hit a brick wall. Finally they said, 'Can we remove this brick wall from your life?' I was like, 'Yeah!'"

—**ERIK LARSEN**, on being fired as *Aquaman* writer. His last issue is October's #62.

eat your veggies!

TASTE TEST

Mom's always telling you that vegetables are good for you and comics will rot your brain. But is she right? Look on as we compare the benefits of a real carrot vs. comic book hero the Flaming Carrot:

Filled with urge to right injustices throughout the world **Edge: Flaming Carrot**	Filled with "betacarotine"
Burns with anger for evildoers everywhere **Edge: Flaming Carrot**	Burns if you leave it on the stove too long
Stews with hatred for supervillains	Goes great in stews **Edge: Real Carrot**
Seal of approval from Dark Horse Comics	Seal of approval from U.S.D.A. Choice **Edge: Real Carrot**
Price: $2.95/issue; works out to $23.60/pound	Price: $1.69/pound. What a bargain! **Edge: Real Carrot**
Created by Bob Burden **Edge: Flaming Carrot**	It's a burden to eat the damn things
Famous catch phrase: "Ut!" **Edge: Flaming Carrot**	Famous catch phrase: "Eat me. You'll see better."
Read and enjoyed by the *Wizard* Bunny **Edge: Flaming Carrot**	Eaten by bunnies

THA WINNAH...

The Flaming Carrot by a 5-3 margin! In your face, Mom! ■ **THE *WIZARD* STAFF**

SHI'S BACK

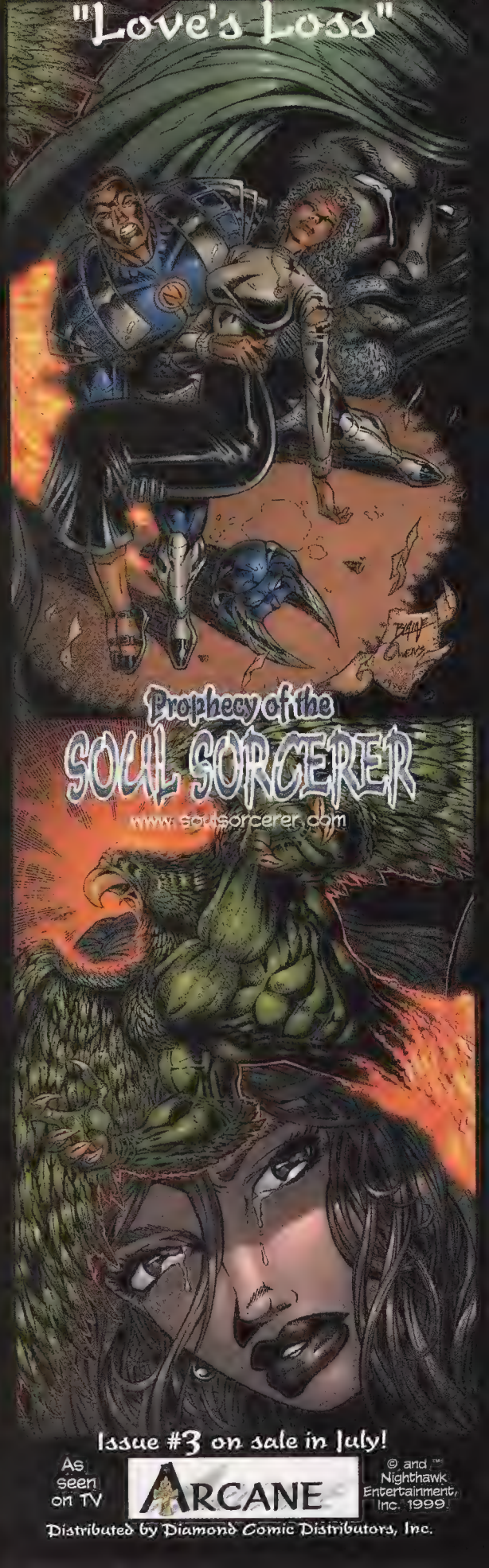
New series, movie plans

Shi is back, and he's back too...Billy Tucci, that is.

The new *Shi: Ring of Fire* series debuts this August with Shi creator Tucci back penciling and co-writing; no word yet on a co-writer. Tucci has not touched the character in two years. "We're going to focus on her journey to Japan," Tucci said. "She's on the run for her life."

Shi: Ring of Fire will be a continuing series, either monthly or bimonthly, and will mark the end of the successive string of *Shi* mini-series. "It's her new and final number one," Tucci said.

Shi will sport a new costume—the same costume actress Tia Carrere will wear in the upcoming "Shi" movie, which is currently undergoing script rewrites. Before the new series begins, look for a special movie edition *Shi* comic, which may contain script excerpts, biographies of Tucci and Carrere and a new comic story by Tucci. ■ **JUSTIN JONES**



ON THE MOVE

MARK WAID, NEW *JLA* WRITER, ON THE TEAM'S SEVEN-MEMBER LINEUP: "[PREVIOUS WRITER] GRANT MORRISON COULD HANDLE A DOZEN JLAers BRILLIANTLY, BUT I THINK IT'S GOING TO BE EASIER TO GET INTIMATE–AND CREATE SUBPLOTS AND CHARACTER DYNAMICS–WITH A SMALLER CAST."

A FULL PAGE SIDEBAR IS AN OXYMORON

NAME	FORMER BOOK	NEW BOOK	WRITER/ARTIST?	THE SCOOP
JOHN BYRNE	Still writing *Hulk*, *Spider-Man: Chapter One*, still drawing *Amazing Spider-Man*	*Spider-Woman*	writer/artist	Fans may not like what Byrne has done with *Spider-Man: Chapter One*, but Marvel editors have–they've tapped him for a new Spidey ongoing focused on the character he introduced in *Amazing Spider-Man* #441.
JOE CASEY	*Cable*	*Deathlok*	writer	Follow the bouncing ball: When José Ladrónn was removed as *Cable* artist in favor of controversial Rob Liefeld, Casey abandoned ship. Now he's writing an all-new *Deathlok* series, ironically enough, spun out of *Cable*.
ROB LIEFELD	*Re:Gex*	*Cable*	artist	The Dennis Rodman of the comics world (he's loud...he's controversial...but sorry, no multi-colored hair)–returns to the character that made him famous for a third go-'round at Marvel. Now we can make fun of him again!
SCOTT LOBDELL	Still writing *Wildcats*, *Divine Right*, *The Darkness*	*Hellhole*, *Gen13*	writer	Is Scott Lobdell saving up his money to buy Marvel? Or maybe just a new shirt? Sure looks that way, as the writer adds two more titles to his already-full monthly plate.
JOHN OSTRANDER	Still writin' *Martian Manhunter*	*Catwoman*	writer	Catty is goin' Batty as Ostrander promises stronger ties between *Catwoman* and the current "No Man's Land" storyarc shaking down in the Batman titles.
BRIAN PULIDO	Licensing and marketing stuff	*Lady Death*, *Evil Ernie*	writer	The Chaos! founder and creator returns to full-time writing, just in time to destroy the Chaos! universe. And we thought only John Byrne destroyed universes.
MARK WAID	Still writing *Flash*, *Captain America*	*JLA*	writer	DC Fanboy Number One lands DC's Big One and guts the hell outta the team. Just don't expect Alex Ross to paint any covers.
MIKE WIERINGO	*Sensational Spider-Man*	*Tellos*	artist	Bosom buddies 'Ringo and old *Sensational* partner Todd Dezago go creator-owned with the *Battle Chasers*-flavored *Tellos*.
LEINIL YU	X-Men fill-ins	*Wolverine*	artist	Yu returns home, as the former permanent *Wolverine* guy, is the new permanent *Wolverine* guy again. Dig it.

A COLD DAY IN HELL

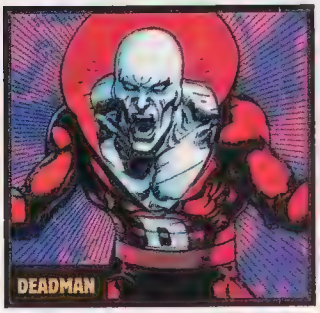
So when is DC Comics having its next company crossover? When Hell freezes over. That's September for you mere mortals out there.

The underworld gets iced and spills into the DC Universe this fall in the five-issue *Day of Judgment* mini-series. Newcomer Geoff Johns (of DC's *Stars and S.T.R.I.P.E.*) will be writing, with rookie penciler Matt Smith along for the ride.

Here's how the trouble starts: Rogue angel and JLA villain Asmodel has teamed up with Etrigan the Demon to discover a way to literally freeze Hell over. What's the outcome for the DCU? "Basically, Hell erupts all over Earth," Johns said. "The main eruption is in downtown Manhattan. There're demons flying around, brimstone, lava, the works. It's gonna be big."

It sounds like it. All of DC's magical-types—third-stringers like Deadman, Zatanna, Enchantress and Faust, to name a few—team up with top-tier spandex superheroes such as the JLA to take on the menace. Johns is tight-lipped about plot details ("There're all kinds of cool things I'm not supposed to talk about," he said.), but much of *DOJ* centers around the search for former Spectre Jim Corrigan. "It takes our heroes to Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, everywhere," Johns said.

And there's another little matter of our heroes fighting the damned. "Think about it," Johns said. "If Hell is spilling onto Earth, that means bad guys who were dead are now walking around somewhere. All the evil dead rise. And the heroes, of course, have to rise to the challenge."



And where is Neron, DC's overlord of Hell, throughout all of this? "We'll see him. He's definitely popping up," Johns said. Is he the mastermind on this Hell of a ride? "Um, you'll see," Johns said doubtfully. "He gets a licking." ■ CH

GAIMAN RETURNS

Sandman celebrates 10th b-day

Sandman is a 12-foot tall black fox living in a Japanese castle during the 16th century. Hey, we don't make this stuff up—Neil Gaiman does.

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of the groundbreaking Vertigo/DC *Sandman* series, creator Neil Gaiman will return to write *Sandman: The Dream Hunters*, a hardcover graphic novel set for winter release. The tome will feature illustrations by renowned Japanese artist Yoshitaka Amano.

It's an unusual setup for a comic, befitting the always atypical Sandman stories. "The story's about a fox in love with a monk," Gaiman said. "It features mythical Japanese creatures—baku—that graze on dreams." Gaiman promised many things more dangerous, too, including a murder plot, and lots of familiar characters seen from a different point of view.

"Sandman fans will enjoy this," Gaiman promised. "It was a lovely feeling when this huge fox climbed up on a rock and began to talk. It was very enjoyable for me." ■ TRENT D. McNEELEY

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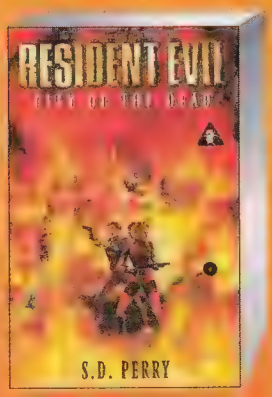
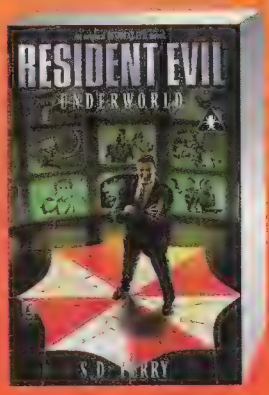
RESIDENT EVIL

You know you're dying for it. With the release of the next eagerly awaited Resident Evil game still months away, feed your need with these two chilling novels from bestselling sci-fi author S.D. Perry...



City of the Dead



Underworld

Before the intrepid heroes of this novel can discover the truth behind the sinister Umbrella Corporation conspiracy, they must fend off a renegade band of paramilitaries and a menagerie of genetically engineered killing machines.

Available wherever books are sold.

Pocket Books

'CHAMPIONS II' SLUGS IT OUT

It's a blast from the past, but with a modern twist

A whopping 17 years after *Contest of Champions* became Marvel Comics' first-ever mini-series, this July sees the sequel—*Contest of Champions II*, a five-issue, biweekly offering from writer Chris Claremont (*Fantastic Four*) and artist Oscar Jiminez (*Wolverine: Black Rio*). In the tradition of the vintage '80s epic, *CoC II* will pit all of Marvel's heroes against each other, under the manipulation of cosmic baddies. Of course, the old formula will feature a contemporary twist: Readers will choose the winners of some central slugfests via a vote on Marvel's Website (www.marvel.com).

The story, Claremont said, begins when Marvel's champions are inexplicably teleported into outer space: "An alien race arrives and drags the heroes of Earth into a contest to determine who among them will be champions of the universe. The heroes are unaware that the alien race has an ulterior motive which, if successful, will lead to the destruction of the world."

Fans will vote the outcomes of four of the inter-hero clashes: the Hulk vs. Mr. Fantastic (in #2), the New Warriors vs. the Slingers (#3), Daredevil vs. Deadpool (#4), and Gambit vs. Hawkeye (#5).

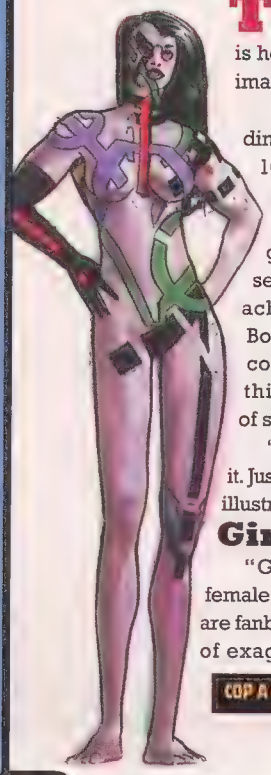
Despite the clashes of titans, Claremont guaranteed a story that's not simply a celebrity deathmatch, but actually the culmination of years' worth of dangling plotlines. "This is not just a punch-fest," he said. "What you have is a story wherein old enemies get a chance for revenge. Some may live; some may die; some may wish they'd died."

While online voters' picks will indeed affect the series' end result, the Contest's ultimate decision remains in the hands of the creators. That in mind, 17-year *X-Men* veteran Claremont made one solemn, surprising vow: "The X-Men do not save the day." ■ DS

FOOD FIGHT Leggo my Eggo or it's time to throw down.

ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

Moore cops an attitude with ABC's newest release, 'Top Ten'



The latest offering in Alan Moore's "America's Best Comics" line is here, and ready to arrest readers' imaginations.

Top Ten, the story of an interdimensional police force made up of 10 heroes from all across time and space, is gearing up for July release. "*Top Ten* will be very gritty, but not in the 1980s comic sense," Moore said. "I'm trying to achieve the same texture Steven Bochco attains with an 'NYPD Blue' cop drama, all the while keeping things in the absurd world of superheroes."

"Absurd" barely begins to cover it. Just take a look at two of Moore's cops, illustrated by series artist Gene Ha.

Girl One

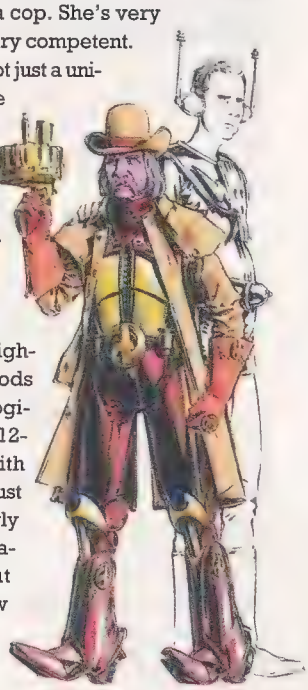
"Girl One is a bio-engineered female, created by people who basically are fanboys. That's why she's got this kind of exaggerated Lara Croft physique. Gene and I have a notion that perhaps some corporation decided it would be a good publicity coup to have a living video game character. She eventually broke contract, and now she needs a job, so she's a cop. She's very good at that—very tough and very competent.

"We reveal in #2 that that's not just a uniform she wears—it's her skin. She has control over every pigment of her body, and can change the patterns to make them do whatever she wants. Her control is so fine, she could probably show movies on her skin."

COP A FEEL Or feel a cop. Keep it real. Just don't stop.

Dust Devil

"Dust Devil is basically a high-tech cowboy. He uses the methods of the Old West with a technological twist, like that found in his 12-shooter. A personality quirk with him is that he's obsessive—he must keep his boots and gun amazingly clean. By #5 or #6, he will probably acquire a fine saddle. But that's a whole story in itself, now isn't it?" ■ JM



GOOD-BYE MARVEL, HELLO INTERNET

Stan Lee unveils his online heroes

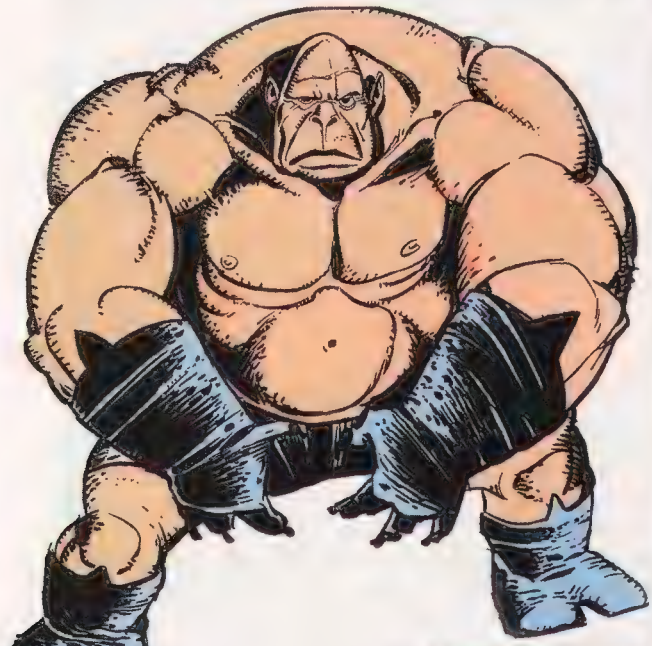
The saying is apparently wrong—you *can* teach an old dog new tricks.

Stan Lee, the Marvel Comics founder who recently started a new company for his own creations—Stan Lee Media—has announced his first new project. "It's a massive script called *The Seventh Portal*," Lee said. "And even though it's a comic book superhero story in concept, it's so different in presentation."

Lee will roll out the story via his Website (www.stanlee.net) in early June. "We're drawing it as if it is a comic," Lee said. "but we're figuring out ways to have it accompanied by music, animation and narration. It's like nothing I've ever worked on before." Lee said *The Seventh Portal* may "hopefully become a movie eventually. We have high hopes."

The story features a team of seven heroes from around the globe who Lee said "get superpowers via the Internet itself. They combat a group of seven villains from another world—one for each hero, you gotta be fair—with the fate of our planet at stake." And even though the stakes are high, Lee's having a great time. "Unlike Marvel style, I'm not writing a synopsis. I'm doing full script," he said. "It's a great experience to be working like this and stretching the creative muscle."

Lee is working with artist Duncan Rouleau (*Alpha Flight*) on *The Seventh Portal.* And the man who created Spider-Man, the Hulk and the Fantastic Four is hoping to create more new magic, with new artists. "I'm working with a whole new crew, people who do movie storyboards," Lee said. "It's wonderful. It's like I could discover a new Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko or John Buscema." ■ JM



HUGGY BEAR Stan Lee's newest badboy, Bearhug.

simon says
debut album jump start

12 hyperactive aggro-melodic cuts containing just the right jarring ingredients for a loud life!

Produced by **Rob Cavallo** and **Mark Needham**
Recorded and Mixed by **Mark Needham**

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NEWS & NOTES

ACCLAIM COMICS

Acclaim returns to monthly comic publishing with *Shadow Man* #1 in July. Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning (*Resurrection Man*) write. Ryan Benjamin (*Iron Man*) illustrates.

CHAOS! COMICS

The Undertaker's got a *sister*? Yep! Jezebel, the sibling the WWF superstar never knew he had, pops up for the very first time in July's *Undertaker* #5!

DC COMICS

Want more from the *JLA: Year One* creative team of **Mark Waid** and Barry Kitson? Okay! *The Flash and Green Lantern: The Brave and the Bold* mini-series launches in July.

• Cliffhanger

Battle Chasers #6 will have a special backup story by manga man, **Adam Warren** (*Dirty Pair*).

IMAGE COMICS

• Top Cow Comics

J. Michael Straczynski's much-anticipated *Rising Stars* #1 hits in July and ships with four alternate covers by series penciler Keu Cha. All covers are available in equal quantities.

MARVEL COMICS

Mega-penciler **Joe Quesada** (*Daredevil*) provides covers for all three #1 issues in the new "M-Tech" line: *Deathlok*, *Warlock* and *X-51*. Longtime X-scribe **Chris Claremont** tackles X-Women Kitty Pryde and Rachel Summers in the three-issue *True Friends* mini-series debuting in July. The old *Quantum and Woody* creative team of **Christopher Priest** and Mark Bright reunite on *Black Panther* #11-#12, hitting in July and August.

X-51

ONI PRESS

Animation freaks rejoice! **Paul Dini** (producer of "The Batman Adventures") debuts a new character named Jingle Belle and wraps up "Honor Rollers" in August's *Oni Double Feature* #13.

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS

Find out what happens when magic confronts big money in *Wyrd: the Reluctant Warrior* #1 in July. **Jim Starlin** (Marvel's *Infinity* tie-in) writes and draws.

SPIDEY ON X-MEN?

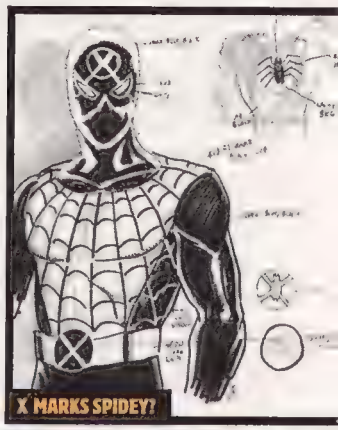
Spidey joins the X-Men? Stop the presses!

Better yet, better not. Spider-Man still swings solo, despite a Marvel announcement to the contrary.

A press release dated April 1, 1999 stated that Spidey, his genetic code mutated from the bite of a radioactive spider, would join Marvel's mutant X-Men in a four-issue *Spider-Man: X Marks the Spider* mini-series. Joe Kelly (*Deadpool*) was slated to write the series, and visuals of a new costume by Marvel Knights editor and inker Jimmy Palmiotti were available at Marvel's Website, www.marvel.com.

But *what* was the date of that release? Oh, yeah—April Fool's Day. "It was all a big prank," Palmiotti said. "The idea was to get people to check out the new Website, and just to have some fun." It worked. Hits on Marvel's Website, where a massive revision and redesign debuted on April 1, soared. Several online comic "news services" took the bait, posting the story as new, hot news...before hurriedly taking it down when they figured out the gag.

All in all, quite the success. So does Marvel have an encore planned for next April Fool's Day? "Maybe," Palmiotti said. "But if you think I'm gonna show my hand now, then *you're* being foolish." ■ JM


X MARKS SPIDEY?

THUMBING OFF

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

THUMBS UP

"AMERICA'S BEST COMICS" Writer Alan Moore is back! Thirteen years after *Watchmen* wowed readers everywhere, Moore's new "ABC" line is knocking a new generation on their collective kiesters. Moore's *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* and *Tom Strong* have been nothing short of stellar!

"BATMAN BEYOND" The idea of someone other than Bruce Wayne in the Batsuit sounded cheeseball. But the futuristic "Batman Beyond" has become a sizzling cartoon sensation, with an anime-inspired look and a youthful Batman who has to learn from his mistakes. And Bruce is still on hand, this time as a grizzled veteran reminiscent of the role he played in *The Dark Knight Returns*.

BOWEN DESIGNS MARVEL BUSTS The little head-and-shoulders statues of Marvel heroes and villains do an amazing job of capturing the personality and essence of each character. And attention to detail is astonishing–the diminutive Ant-Man is even done in smaller scale!

THUMBS DOWN

MARVEL'S (LACK OF) CONTINUITY The Rhino is in prison in *Thunderbolts* #26. He's out in *Nova* #1. So...what happened in the middle? For a company that's founded on strong continuity, such a glitch really stands out. All it takes is one of those little caption boxes, y'know.

NEW MARVEL MONOPOLY In the Monopoly board game, you buy up places. And Marvel Comics has the coolest places of all! Avengers Mansion! The S.H.I.E.L.D. Helicarrier! But in this game, you buy...back-issue comics? AARRGGHH! This is such a no-brainer, it hurts. And somehow, someone screwed it up.

UNDERPANTS Nothing ruins an otherwise perfectly good day like having your underwear creep up your ass. Constantly pulling your shorts out of your butt-crack is just no way to live. We'd switch to thongs, but they just don't feel manly enough.

VAMPI TURNS 30, SEEKS IMPLANTS

She certainly doesn't look it, but busty bloodsucker Vampirella will celebrate her 30th birthday this summer. And Harris Comics ain't gonna let her do it quietly.

Harris Editor-in-Chief David Bogart explained it succinctly: "We're bringing in some of the best talent available to contribute stories." The talent implants include a bonus story by the *Superman For All Seasons* creative team of Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale in *Vampirella* #18, a story by Christopher Priest (*Black Panther*) and Alan Davis (*X-Men*) in #19, while #20 has a tale by Warner Bros. animation experts Ty Templeton and Bruce Timm. As if that wasn't enough, Vampi will change back to her original costume in August's #18, to boot.

Loeb had definite reasons for jumping the birthday bandwagon. "Vampirella pegged out a particular sexual/horror corner of the comic universe that is now overflowing," he said. "At the time she was created, she was unique. Whenever you do something unique, it will stand the test of time."

Timm agreed. "She has the sexiest costume in comics," he said, "but there's also some kind of underlying innocence to her. Even though she's a vampire, and she wears this really scant costume, strangely enough, there's kind of a sweetness to her. Classic good girl/bad girl."

"Sex appeal is a big part of the book," Bogart admitted. "You can't lie about it. But sex appeal doesn't give you 30-plus years. Month after month, people read it because they enjoy the story. There's more to the character than just titillation."

Hey! He said "ti-." Never mind.

■ JAKE ROSSEN

HOOTERVILLE Breasts. Ta ta's. Racks. Knockers. Melons.

oops!

OUR BAD!

The photo of Vince Sullivan from *Wizard* #93 was miscredited. The photographer was Maggie Thompson...The new PaRappa the Rapper video game was incorrectly listed as "Unjammer Lami" in *Wizard* #93. The game's correct title is UmJammer Lammy...And contrary to what was published in *Wizard* #93, *Wizard* Publisher Gareb Shamus is indeed alive. Much to our chagrin...Joe Harris (not Joe Casey) is the writer, producer and director of the film "Rapscallions."

FULL BLEED™ STUDIOS

PITT IN JUNE

CREW #4

STORY RICHARD PACE

ART SCOTT LEE

COVER BY DALE KEOWN

THE SLAYER

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LAST MAN STANDING

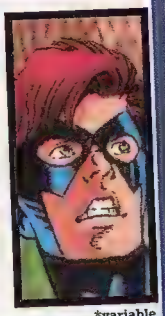
comic battles you never thought you'd see

ANT-MAN VS. THE ATOM

THE COMBATANTS

TALE OF THE TAPE

6'*	HEIGHT	6'*
185lbs.*	WEIGHT	180lbs.*
72"*	REACH	72"*
Elmsford, NY	HOMETOWN	Ivy Town, DCU
Avengers	WEAK LINK	JLA
7	MID-LIFE CRISES	1



*variable

A brilliant biochemist, Dr. Henry Pym discovered rare subatomic particles (dubbed Pym Particles) which could reduce a person's size to less than an inch. Pym soon created a cybernetic helmet to communicate with ants. Calling himself Ant-Man, Pym helped form the Avengers and demonstrated that size *doesn't* matter.

As a graduate student, Ray Palmer found a small fragment of a white dwarf star which he used to shrink himself down to a microscopic level. He took on the identity of the Atom and joined the ranks of the JLA. With his atomic punch, this li'l guy proves that big things come in small packages.

tha winnah... While checking out a minor disturbance in Central Park, Ant-Man mistakes the Atom for a thief who stole his Pym Particles. He lunges at the JLAer, who instinctively shrinks down, narrowly avoiding Ant-Man's blows. Just one short step behind, Ant-Man shrinks himself, contacts a nearby ant colony and leads an army of ants straight towards the Atom. At the last possible instant, however, the Atom shrinks to microscopic size. Confused, the ants scatter, leaving Ant-Man scratching his tiny noggin. That's when the Atom returns, landing a few well-placed shots to Ant-Man's chest. Not wanting his quarry to escape again, a frenzied Ant-Man grabs a nearby nail, launching a savage attack. Armed with just a discarded Q-Tip, the Atom parries and avoids a grazing blow. Then, putting all his mass into one atomic punch—BAM!—he knocks Ant-Man's helmet clear off, leaving Pym down for the count. Pulling his adversary to safety, the Atom heads home, mumbling something about ants always ruining a good picnic.

this month's battle drawn by MIKE WIERINGO

FIRST LOOK 1

BATMAN: WAR ON CRIME

Alex Ross and Paul Dini's Dark Knight takes on dirty street crime—and rethinks his reason for being

"The time has come to finally do Batman," Alex Ross says. "People don't associate me with him, but we'll see if we can change that."

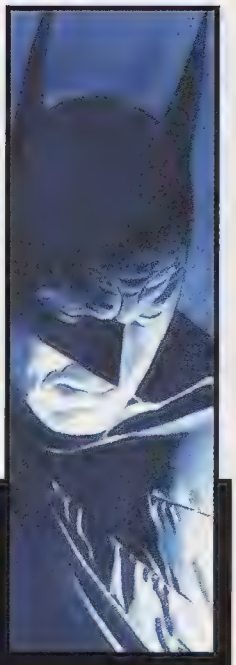
The acclaimed painter behind last year's *Superman: Peace On Earth* reunites with *Peace* writer Paul Dini ("Batman Beyond" producer) for *Batman: War on Crime*, a large-format graphic novel due out in November. But be warned: *War* features none of the regular supporting cast, no elaborate weapons...not even the Batmobile. "It's Batman distilled down to his essence—he just has a cape and a rope," Ross says. "This is a regular man who swore an oath to fight crime. If he has too many high-tech accouterments, then it becomes a rich man's war on crime."

In a departure from the global-scale *Peace on Earth*, where Superman fought world hunger, *War on Crime* tells a tale of loss and retribution on a far more intimate level. It begins when Batman discovers a victim orphaned in much the same way he, as Bruce Wayne, was many years ago. Difference is, this is just your typical kid, someone who doesn't have the cushion of wealth that Bruce had to fall back on. "Suddenly, Batman's wrestling with the idea, 'Was it my money that made it possible for me to pursue this lofty ideal?'" says Ross. "It causes him to reassess things and re-examine his dedication."

For Dini and Ross, intimate, street-level crimes are an overlooked part of the Batman mythos every bit as important as the "performance art" crimes of supervillains. "What we show is the simplicity of Batman dealing with real crime, getting into how depressing that really is," says Dini. "Crime is real-world stuff, so we show the various levels of it in Gotham City, from street theft to bought-off politicians...just how many kinds of things this guy deals with."

A stand-alone story, *War on Crime* represents Ross' birthday card to the Dark Knight, who celebrates his 60th anniversary this year. A card signed with a signature only Ross can provide, by allowing the character's essence to shine through. "Batman is defined by his particular war on crime," Ross says. "So, in effect, what sets him apart as a character is what's going to set this project apart from the others. We'll see his pursuit on all its levels, and more importantly, we'll see what any one of us would do in his situation." (W)

California-based writer Scott Brick is declaring war on pizza-delivery drivers who don't deliver in 30 minutes or less, safety and the law be damned!



VITAL STATS

WHO?
Batman, minus any gadgets, vehicles or sidekicks

WHAT?
Batman: War on Crime, a large-format graphic novel, written by Paul Dini and painted/conceptualized/co-plotted by Alex Ross

WHEN?
Tentatively scheduled for November 1999

WHAT'S THE DEAL?
When Batman encounters a child who's lost his parents, just as Bruce Wayne did years ago, he declares an all-out war on crime–as Batman and as millionaire Bruce Wayne.

BY SCOTT BRICK

DRESS DOWN In *War on Crime*, Batman has no Robin, no Batmobile and no Bat-Gargoyle-Shellac.

FIRST LOOK 2

NEW WARRIORS

Marvel's teen heroes return with new members...and a chip on their shoulders

It's like 'Dawson's Creek' with superpowers," says Jay Faerber, writer of the revamped New Warriors, who get their second shot at an ongoing comics series this fall. And like the TV drama he compares it to, *New Warriors* promises plenty of teen angst.

"They are almost like a support group for themselves," explains Faerber, who's no stranger to teen angst as writer of Marvel's other brat pack, *Generation X*. "These are teenagers, who happen to be superheroes, who are desperately trying to get a rep, but it's hard when the media just loves the Avengers and the Fantastic Four."

New Warriors alum Nova, who will wear a different costume when with the gang, leads the team this time around. But he'll discover it's a tough job when one teammate's his ex, Namorita, who will gain new powers. Comic relief will again be provided by Speedball, and Turbo will don her flying Torpedo suit. Old members Firestar, Justice and Night Thrasher have moved on, however, so two new heroes fill out the team: the electricity-wielding Bolt and Aegis, an African-American teen from a tough neighborhood who discovers a mythical, energy-absorbing shield. Watch for Aegis to be taken under the wing of a popular Marvel character.

The gang finds refuge from a world that doesn't want them in their own version of Avengers Mansion: the Crash Pad, a slick, high-tech headquarters underneath the Brooklyn Bridge, funded by former member Night Thrasher (who's rich as sin). "It's a place where the kids can go and bitch," Faerber says of the Warriors' slacker "Hall of Justice." "Like, 'I was fighting Rhino, and Spider-Man shows up. He gets all the credit and I get jack.'"

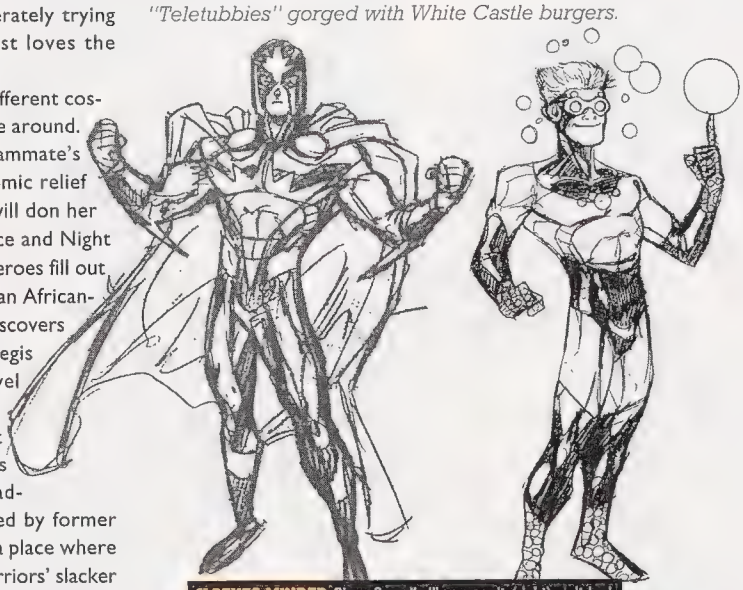
Faerber also plans to create a civilian hangout, perhaps a coffeehouse, where the Warriors can mull over their "90210"-like existence. This opportunity for casual conversation, not the fisticuffs, attracted artist Steve Scott to the series. "My favorite stuff in Spider-Man was Peter Parker interacting with Mary Jane," Scott says. "I have fun with the downtime. There's a certain challenge to making a quiet scene work."

The team re-forms in issue one when old Fantastic Four villain Blastaar gets hauled into our dimension from the Negative Zone and proceeds to rip New York apart. After Blastaar, look for the Warriors to whup ass on old villain Genecide, that nutty Darwinist babe, in issue two, and new villain Firestrike, a high-tech arsonist, in issues three and four.

Youth sells big these days, and there are a lot of comics out there starring younger heroes. How will the New Warriors set themselves apart from the pack? "DC's Titans are all about continuing a legacy," Faerber explains. "Young Justice are in it for fun. But the New Warriors are like a garage band trying to make the big time, a group of kids trying to make a name for themselves...and nothing seems to go their way."

BY BILL JENSEN

Long Island-based writer Bill Jensen's life is kinda like "Teletubbies" gorged with White Castle burgers.



CLOTHES MINDED Okay, Speedball's new suit (right) ain't bad, but what's the deal with Nova's stupid-ass new costume (left)?

VITAL STATS

WHO?
The *new* New Warriors: old familiars Nova, Namorita, Speedball and Turbo, and newbies Bolt and Aegis.

WHAT?
New Warriors, written by Jay Faerber (*Generation X*) and illustrated by Steve Scott (*Razor*).

WHEN?
Tentatively scheduled for fall 1999.

WHAT'S THE DEAL?
"Of course they want to do good and help people and all that nonsense," says Faerber, "but basically they are just young kids with superpowers making hard choices [about] how to deal with the moral, legal and ethical implications of being a vigilante." Expect to see a lot of guest appearances by former Warriors in the first issue.

WALDEN

FIRST LOOK 3

SPEED RACER

Here he comes, here comes Speed Racer—with an all-new origin story, a mystery villain and Chim Chim

You may think you know all about Speed Racer, but writer/artist Tommy Yune wants to give you more. He's going to add something Speed Racer's never had throughout his long history: an origin story.

Speed Racer first appeared in a Japanese manga comic titled *Mach Go Go Go* by Tatsuo Yoshida, published in the mid-'60s. The popular Japanese cartoon that aired in the United States during the late '60s and early '70s was adapted from the comic, and that's how everybody's heard of Speed Racer today—including Yune. "I grew up watching it when I was 4 years old on channel 11 in St. Louis," he says. But despite Speedy's long history, his origins have never been told until now. "Speed Racer's and the Mach 5's origins were never really addressed in the television series," Yune notes. "That's what we've decided to address."

A three-issue mini-series, written, penciled and inked by Yune from WildStorm Productions, will finally reveal Speed Racer's past. Because it's a flashback, it features a younger, 18-year-old Speedy and all his friends—his girlfriend Trixie; his dad Pops, the Mach 5's designer; his brother Spridle, and Spridle's monkey Chim Chim.

Yune wrote, drew and self-published comics in the early '90s while creating video and computer games for various companies. While working at GTE, Yune met WildStorm founder Jim Lee, who designed some game packaging. That led to Yune joining WildStorm as, in his words, "the lead technology guy," but he never lost his desire to create comics.

Meanwhile, Speed Racer grew more popular, even with the cartoon off the air. In the late '80s and early '90s, Now Comics published new *Speed Racer* comics. In 1993, MTV reran the cartoon; in 1996, the Cartoon Network followed suit. The following year, a new "Speed Racer" cartoon began airing in Japan. Yune and his dream finally came together when WildStorm bought the rights to the hotrodder; the author leapt at the chance to return to two longtime loves at the same time.

Yune's series is a flashback, relating the origins of Speed Racer and his Mach 5. All of the characters will be much younger than they were in the cartoon, and Pops is first developing the Mach 5 technology that will go under Speedy's hood. Unfortunately, mob boss and new villain Buck Condor has an unseemly interest in what Pops is cookin'. "Buck Condor is the main villain," Yune says. "He's a shadowy crime boss who's after the same thing everybody else is: the hottest car technology that'll help him rule the world. He wants to steal it from the Mach 5."

By adding something new, Yune risks alienating Speed's fans, but he's not too worried. "A lot of licensed, anime-based titles as of late have been somewhat maligned, in the sense that 'if it wasn't originally from Japan, it's not going to be handled that well,'" Yune says. "[So] we're putting a lot of effort into this to make it one of the most faithful and diligent adaptations."

Besides, Yune adds, "Because it's a self-contained story that starts as a clear beginning, [readers] don't have to have any knowledge of the 'Speed Racer' series. This is a great starting point."

Hollywood-based writer David Seidman follows the "Saved by the Bell: The New Class" stars around on his Mach 5 tricycle. Go, David Seidman, go!

GOOOO! What's this, a remake of "Blood Flows Red on the Highway"?

BY DAVID SEIDMAN

VITAL STATS

WHO?
Speed Racer, Trixie, Pops and the other "Speed Racer" characters, plus a new villain, gangster lord Buck Condor.

WHAT?
A three-issue mini-series about Speed and his car, the Mach 5, by writer/penciler/inker Tommy Yune and published by WildStorm Productions.

WHEN?
Tentatively scheduled for August 1999.

WHAT'S THE DEAL?
Speedy's origin story is finally uncovered in this flashback, and we meet the first villain Speedy ever played chicken with–Buck Condor.

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FIRST LOOK 4

BATMAN: DARK VICTORY

The Dark Knight grapples with a new sidekick, new DA and new foes—but don't call it a 'Long Halloween' sequel

Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale want to make something perfectly clear: Don't call *Batman: Dark Victory* a sequel.

The writer/artist team prefer the term "continuation" for the follow-up to their popular 1997-98 mini-series, *Batman: The Long Halloween*. The new series is a 13-part murder mystery, just like its predecessor.

In *Long Halloween*, a rookie Batman puts his faith in Gotham City District Attorney Harvey Dent, only to be betrayed when Dent becomes the villain Two-Face. This time around, Loeb and Sale want to focus on the one constant ray of light in the Dark Knight's life—Robin. "What we wanted to do was to tell a story about, for want of a better explanation, [Batman's] victory over the dark, which is where the title comes from," says Loeb, fresh off the hit mini-series *Superman for All Seasons*, also done with Sale. "What this story has going for it is how Batman came to find hope in a 10-year-old boy named Dick Grayson."

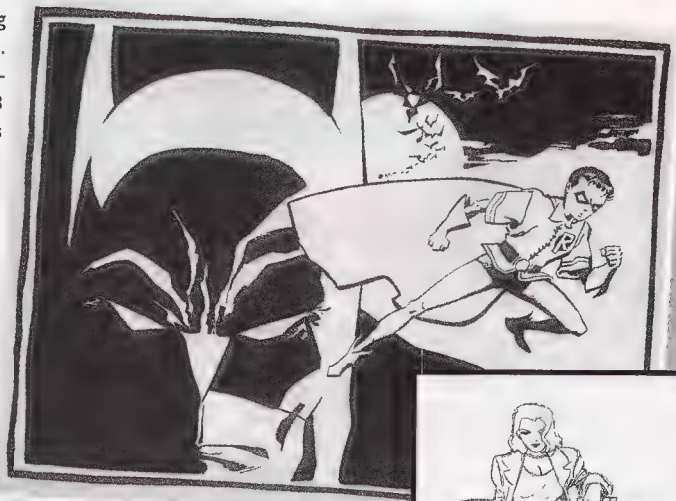
Of course, the Boy Wonder will have to run the gamut of bizarre supervillains—but not the ones you'd expect. "Other than the Joker and Two-Face, we purposefully drifted towards the second tier of Batman villains, because I can feel more free to play around with them a little bit, visually," says Sale. "I'm very much looking forward to Mr. Freeze."

Loeb's focus on supervillains, not the gangster families from Batman's early career, is purposeful. "One of the main ideas behind *Long Halloween* was how the power shifted from gangsters to freaks in Gotham City," the writer says. "And if you read present-day continuity, those families are gone—the Maroni family and the Falcone family, [who] ruled Gotham City for years. One of the questions that we're going to be looking at is what happened to the rest of those families."

Batman and Robin will grapple with more than just freakish supervillains, though. "A new character [named Janice Porter] who takes Harvey Dent's place in the district attorney's office has a very different attitude towards Commissioner Gordon and towards Batman," Loeb says. Porter, he adds, will "make both of their lives very difficult."

Loeb and Sale both insist that readers won't need to read *Long Halloween* to understand *Dark Victory*. "They are two stand-alone stories," Loeb says. Nevertheless, both he and Sale believe that *Dark Victory* will offer readers the same thrills that made *Long Halloween* so popular. "*Long Halloween* was just the beginning of the journey that Batman had to take to be the character he is today," says Loeb. "You want more suspense? More mystery? It's time to pump up the volume, 'cause *Dark Victory* will have you bursting at the seams." (W)

The last time California-based writer David Seidman burst at the seams, he made a mess all over the place.



NICE GAMS Batman gets help from Robin, but gets hell from Janice Porter, Harvey Dent's successor as Gotham DA.

BY DAVID SEIDMAN

VITAL STATS

WHO?
Batman, Robin, Commissioner Gordon, Joker, Two-Face, lotsa other Bat-villains, the Falcone and Maroni crime families and a new district attorney.

WHAT?
Batman: Dark Victory, a 13-part murder mystery similar to *Batman: The Long Halloween*. [*Editor's note:* Dark Victory *#0, a story bridging the two mini-series, will be packaged exclusively with July's* Wizard *#97.*]

WHEN?
Tentatively scheduled for October 1999.

WHAT'S THE DEAL?
Batman's new partner, Robin, helps the Dark Knight battle mob families and a bevy of supervillains, as Batman recovers from the betrayal of fellow lawman Harvey Dent–now the villainous Two-Face.

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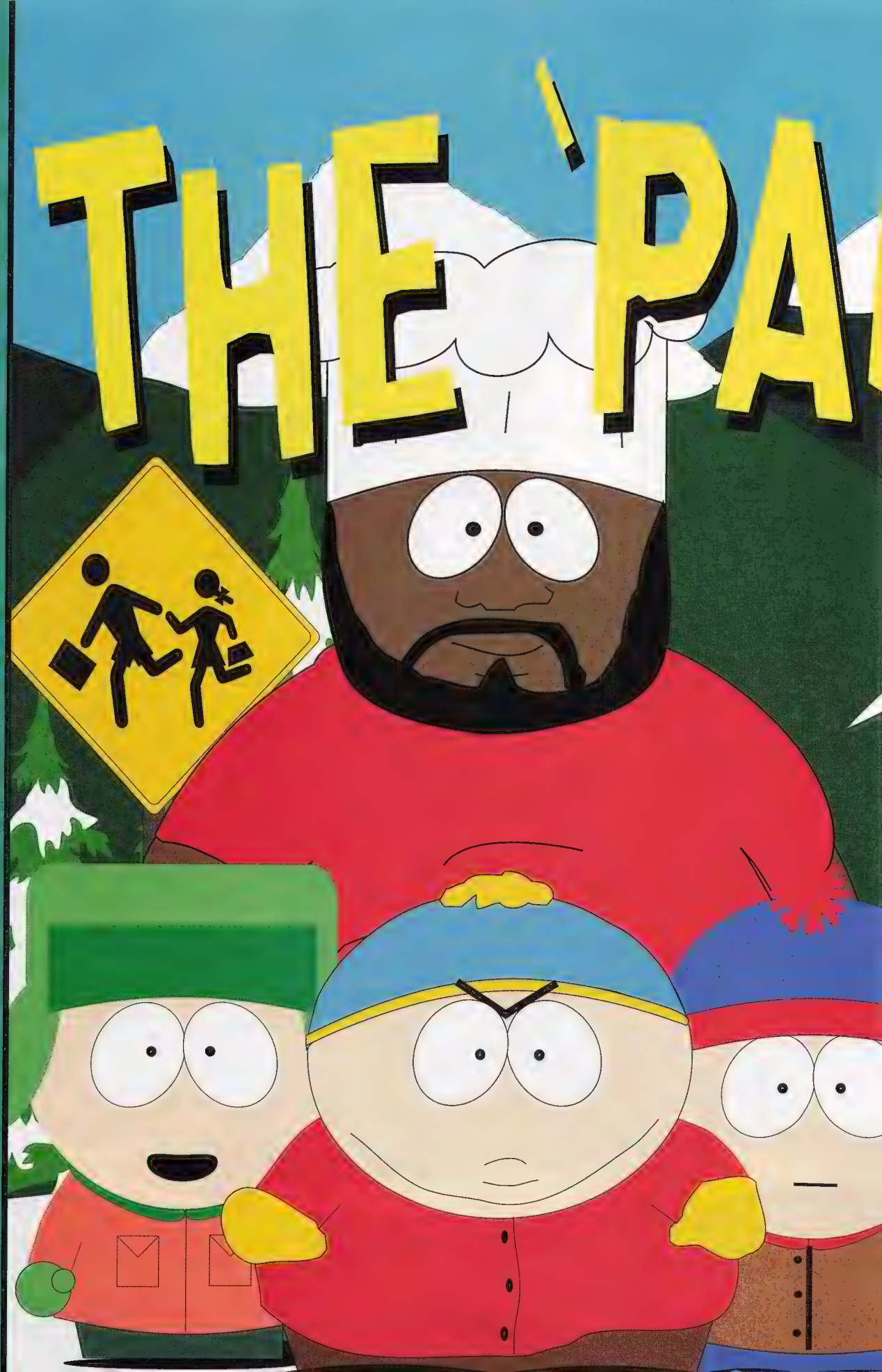

THE PA

RK'WAY

The R-Rated 'South Park' movie promises to be bigger, grosser, sicker—and yes, Kenny will die

By Joe Yanarella

Matt Stone has a secret.

Stone and creative partner Trey Parker are taking their extended TV family—the "South Park" crew of Kyle, Cartman, Kenny and Stan—to the big screen this summer. But it's not what you might think. Oh sure, it's rated R and promises to be even viler and bloodier than the weekly Comedy Central TV smash. And yeah, Chef'll be craving hot monkey love and Mr. Garrison should deliver a sermon through his hand-puppet, Mr. Hat.

But there's one thing you don't know about the film "South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut," scheduled to debut June 18.

"It's a full blown musical," Stone says, in his first interview about the Paramount Pictures film. "It starts with an opening number. It ends with a [musical] finale. Every character has their own song. A lot of 'South Park' fans love the music we do on the show. If you like the show, you're definitely going to like the movie, because it's just bigger and rawer."

Big and raw.

That's just what you've come to expect from "South Park." Our four favorite third-graders and the other twisted inhabitants of "South Park" have helped earn the show a CableACE award, a Primetime Emmy nomination and the highest series episode rating in basic cable history.

And "South Park" has succeeded with some of the rawest situations you could imagine. Storylines like Cartman getting an anal probe, Stan vomiting every time he talks to his girlfriend Wendy, Kenny getting horrifically killed nearly every episode and Kyle being perpetually harassed because he's Jewish. And

SOUTH PARK ™ & © COMEDY PARTNERS. STRIP PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI. "SOUTH PARK: BIGGER, LONGER & UNCUT" PHOTO © 1999 PARAMOUNT PICTURES.

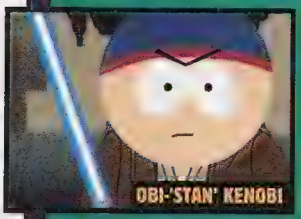
PARK WARS

'South Park' menaces 'Star Wars' in the ultimate parody

Something's screwy in the "Star Wars" Universe. Mace Windu's wearing one of them tall chef hats, R2-D2's a Vietnam Vet and Yoda's eating. . .cheesy poofs?

No, it's not some fever-induced nightmare of George Lucas', it's the latest tribute to two of today's hottest properties. "Park Wars: Episode I: The Little Menace" is a brief, fan-created parody of the "Phantom Menace" preview trailer, mixing "South Park"-style animation with a "Star Wars" theme and soundtrack.

Just over two minutes long, the downloadable (www.countingdown.com) "Park Wars" clip is the brainchild of New Yorker Ayaz Asif and Australian Lincoln Gasking. "It's sort of an oxymoron that 'Star Wars' is a really high-tech CGI, and 'South Park' is really just a 2-D construction paper kind of animation. So we decided to mix the two," says Asif.


OBI-'STAN' KENOBI

After pitching the idea to his friend Gasking (who runs the countingdown.com Web site), the duo tracked down artist Ted Bracewell, who redrew all the "Phantom Menace" trailer scenes with the "South Park" characters. And just about everyone shows up. There's Kyle as Jedi Qui-Gon Jinn, Stan as a young Obi-Wan Kenobi, Ike as an infant Anakin Skywalker, bus driver Crabtree as Darth Maul and the ever-lovin' Chef as Mace Windu. Heck, even Jimbo and his electronic-voiced buddy Ned show up as C-3PO and R2-D2, respectively.

Over a three- to four-week period, Ayaz and company exhaustively edited the entire trailer parody, splicing in the original "Menace" soundtrack. Working on little to no sleep, they managed to just get the parody posted before the second "Menace" preview hit theaters in March. And except for a slight legal bump, they couldn't be happier.

"Comedy Central actually sent us an e-mail saying that it's a legal parody of 'Star Wars,' but it's *not* a legal parody of 'South Park,'" says Asif. "But their lawyers loved it so much they put the trailer on the Comedy Central Web site. There's a little Yoda Cartman where you can download the trailer from their site. They were really cool about it." ■ **CONRAD BAIN**

that's just the core characters. Don't forget about Big Gay Al, the sex-obsessed Chef, Mr. Garrison's evil hand-puppet and Cartman's mom, who has appeared in *Crack Whore* magazine.

And Stone and Parker, tucked away in the "South Park" headquarters in Los Angeles slaving seven days a week juggling the film and ongoing third season of the show, intend on making the movie even worse.

"The whole movie's rated R, so it's super dirty," says Stone. "We can say f--- and we can say sh--, you can't say those on TV. It gives us freedom to just go places material-wise that we haven't been able to go before."

But outside of the usual gratutious violence and cursing, there's actually a story behind "Bigger, Longer & Uncut."

"It has to do with censorship," Stone says. "The movie has to do with the four kids and that's a big, important part of it. You come up with all these great, grand ideas for a movie and you forget that the series is about seeing the world through 8-year-old eyes."

The film, which has been a dream of Stone and creative partner Parker, whom he met at the University of Colorado, has monopolized the pair's time since last July. They've gone through 12 drafts of the script, according to Stone, and are "working seven days a week on the movie until 10 days before [June 18] to finish it." The project has been so time consuming and exhausting that Parker had to bow out of interviews with strep throat, a result of long hours logged between the TV show and the movie.

Compounding the work has been the fact that making the roughly 80-minute film is radically different from the usual 20-something minute TV episode.

THEY KILLED KENNY The three Ds–death, destruction and dirty words abound in "Bigger, Longer & Uncut."

"Time-wise [the movie's] about four episodes, but creatively it feels like about 20 episodes worth of work," said Stone. "The whole idea of making a story interesting for 75-plus minutes is a big challenge and it's not something that we have a lot of experience in."

The 27-year-old Stone gathered experienced at the University of Colorado where he and Parker made crudely produced comedic shorts—a prelude to "The Spirit of Christmas," a five-minute Christmas video commissioned by a Fox executive to send to his friends. The short, which pitted Jesus against Santa with the "South Park" gang looking on, became so hot it inspired a Hollywood bidding war for the "South Park" franchise eventually won by Comedy Central.

Stone's twisted comic style—evident in the show's skewering of such celebrities as Barbra Streisand and Kathie Lee Gifford—came from an upbringing heavily influenced by the BBC television show "Monty Python's Flying Circus." Stone remembers spending his junior high days in Littleton, Colo. watching "'Python' religiously."

"I didn't really understand every joke," Stone explains, "but the fact that I didn't understand it and it was foreign, exotic and different, it just made me love it. Trey and I just kind of gelled because we were both big fans of 'Python' and of that kind of comedy with low blow production value, just absurd comedy."

Lifelong "Python" fan Stone got to realize a dream of his when "Python" cast member Eric Idle signed on to do a voice for the upcoming film, along with former "ER" star George Clooney, Minnie Driver and "King of the Hill" creator Mike Judge. Having one of his idols—no pun intended—around, reduced Stone to a fanboy.

"I've met enough famous people now where it really doesn't freak me out," he said of Idle's appearance. "But any of the Pythons come in the door and I just turn into jelly. I turn into a total retard. It's pretty embarrassing."

In addition to living out his dream by meeting Idle, Stone and Parker have also realized one of their lifelong goals with "Bigger, Longer & Uncut."

"We wanted to do a 'South Park' movie before we had a TV show," Stone says. "A movie's been in our mind for a long time. But if we were going to do a movie, it had to be something we couldn't do on TV and do jokes we could never get away with on TV."

That means Stone and Parker have to go a little farther, be a little grosser and get even more twisted. But that's all part of the magic of "South Park."

"'South Park' touches a nerve that allows people a vicarious thrill and release during such a PC time in our culture," said Debbie Liebling, producer of the weekly "South Park" show. "Everybody gets to laugh without getting in trouble."

Except Kenny, who always gets in trouble and dies in nearly every episode. However, Stone won't reveal the nature of how Kenny will buy it in the film.

"All I can tell you is Kenny does die, because he has to," says Stone. "He's poor and he has to die. It becomes a big part of the movie. He's just around to die. He doesn't serve any other purpose."

Stone and Parker, on the other hand, have been single-minded in their purpose, to produce a "South Park" movie that fans of the show will appreciate. As long as the pair can deliver that, they couldn't care less what anyone else thinks.

"Critics will either love it or hate it," he says. "The only thing that irks us about critics or reviews is that people will say, 'Well, it's just a bunch of fart jokes.' They imply it's an easy show to do. Nothing could be further from the truth. We work our asses off on the show because we want it to be good. We don't want it to suck. People don't understand, fart jokes are really hard to put together."

When a good fart joke comes together, it's worth it. But how that will play to a massive mainstream audience is anybody's guess. I mean, a movie revolving around fart jokes isn't exactly a "date movie," is it?

"It depends on who your date is," laughs Stone. "If your date is a Mormon high school cheerleader, probably not. Actually, I take that back. Mormon high school cheerleaders have the sickest sense of humor. I actually think it would be a good 'date' movie."

Stone doesn't plan on taking a date to "Bigger, Longer & Uncut." In fact, he doubts he'll even see it the weekend it opens. Right around the time the film opens, he'll have a three- or four-week break from the show. He might go camping or to Hawaii for a few days, or maybe just sit around and watch his favorite TV show—"Space Ghost."

Worrying is one thing Stone doesn't plan on doing. He knows the "Titanic"-like wake of "Star Wars: Episode One—The Phantom Menace" and "Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me" might wash away "Bigger, Longer & Uncut." But he's not concerned. Heck, he'll even help the competition.

"I'll be the first in line for 'Star Wars,'" admits Stone. "And I'll definitely see 'Austin Powers.' I won't be watching our box office returns. Once we're done with the movie, we're done with it."

Wizard Senior Managing Editor Joe Yanarella has only one thing to say.

HANKEY PANKY

So you think you're a "South Park" expert? Oh sure, you know that Cartman dressed as Adolph Hitler for Halloween, that Tom Hanks starred in the Mr. Hankey movie and Charles Manson helped show the kids the true meaning of Christmas. But do you really know "South Park" trivia? Take the *Wizard* quiz and figure out which of these statements are true and which are false.

1) Kenny has died in every episode.
2) The perpetrator in a rash of serial killings was a goldfish.
3) Pip once made friends with the son of Satan.
4) Cartman's mom is also his father.
5) Only one of the boys has ever been seen without his hat.
6) Ned is actually a realistic-looking robot created by the Mad Scientist.
7) Mr. Garrison was bald at age 8, had hair at age 20 and was bald again at 30.
8) Zombies are made of Worcestershire sauce and embalming fluid.
9) Cartman has a doll named "Polly Prissy-pants."
10) Kyle's mom once led a townwide crusade to rid South Park of comic books.
11) The kids once hired a hooker to give their parents herpes.
12) As a child, Mr. Garrison was outdone at a talent show by a young Kathie Lee Gifford.
13) "Evil Cartman" was actually evil.
14) The proprietor of the Bookmobile violated the town's chickens.
15) Pip is from Australia.
16) The townspeople once ate Eric Roberts.
17) Cartman once consumed an entire box of Tinker Toys.
18) Former teen heartthrob Joey Lawrence was sacrificed in a voodoo mutilation ritual.
19) Mr. Hankey puts himself in Stan's mouth when Stan's sleeping.
20) Cartman wore diapers until he was three.

1-False, 2-True, 3-T, 4-T, 5-T, 6-F, 7-T, 8-T, 9-T, 10-F, 11-T, 12-T, 13-F, 14-T, 15-F, 16-T, 17-F, 18-F, 19-T, 20-F

THE WIZARD Q&A

BY CHRIS HUTCHINS • PHOTOS BY BOB MARTIN

THE MORE COMICS LEGEND ALAN MOORE shuns the limelight, the wilder the rumor mill swirls around him.

The rumors say the award-winning writer's a devil worshiper. You'll hear he's got a really creepy voice. He's a reclusive egomaniac, a mad genius, some kind of humorless goth-type. The Englishman's been banned by the State Department from traveling to the United States. And if you look at the superspooky black-and-white photograph that accompanies most of Moore's work, you'd probably believe *every word*.

But here Moore sits in his Northampton, England home, lighting up a smoke and speaking humbly about his career. Relaxed and cordial, he doesn't see himself as the writing genius others paint him to be. "The idea of being on some kind of pedestal isn't as much fun as it looks," he says. "The fact I don't go to conventions and tend to eschew celebrity in any way should give you a clue how I feel about that. Okay, so some letter in a fanzine says you're a genius. Well, for about 10 minutes, you can say, 'Yes, I probably am a genius.' But it didn't take long before I realized that was absurd."

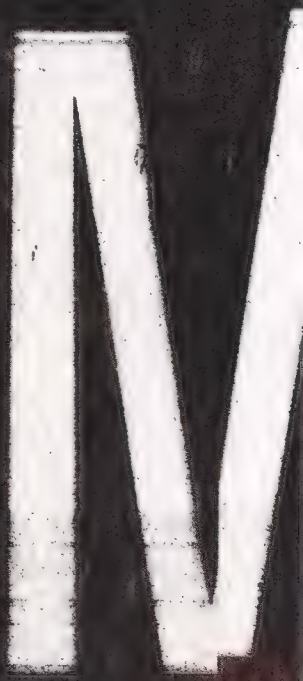
This isn't the Alan Moore of the rumor mill. No, the creator of the new America's Best Comics line is all too human here, smiling and bragging about his two pierced, punky daughters ("Both of them have more metal in their bodies than the average appliance," he says.). He recounts stories from the early '90s, when he played in a pop band called The Emperors of Ice Cream: "We had a girlie backing band, and I had this wonderful, huge white zoot suit," he laughs. "But it didn't work out."

So Moore didn't hit the Billboard charts. Big deal. He's recognized as a pioneer in comic books. Moore began impressing the American audience in 1983 with his reinvention of the modern horror comic in DC Comics' *Saga of the Swamp Thing*. He gave readers the politically-charged *V for Vendetta*. But Moore is perhaps best known for *Watchmen*, the 1986 series that gave readers a superhero story without the superheroics. The story rattled the industry, and catapulted Moore to critical acclaim, media attention and superfandom among readers.

In the late 1980s, Moore left DC—mainly over an ownership and royalties dispute over *V for Vendetta* and *Watchmen*—vowing to never write for the company again. But now Moore is back at DC, writing his America's Best Comics line for the DC-owned WildStorm Productions. He speaks freely about his current relationship with the company, and his new comics line. He also debunks some rumors, explaining why he hates being seen as a comics "god" and about being a practicing magician—not a devil worshiper.

Oh, and the one about Moore being banned from America? That's between him and the State Department. After all, there are some things you just don't ask a practicing magician...

Is he a reclusive egomaniac? A mad genius? A devil worshiper? Once and for all, comics legend **ALAN MOORE** sets the record straight.



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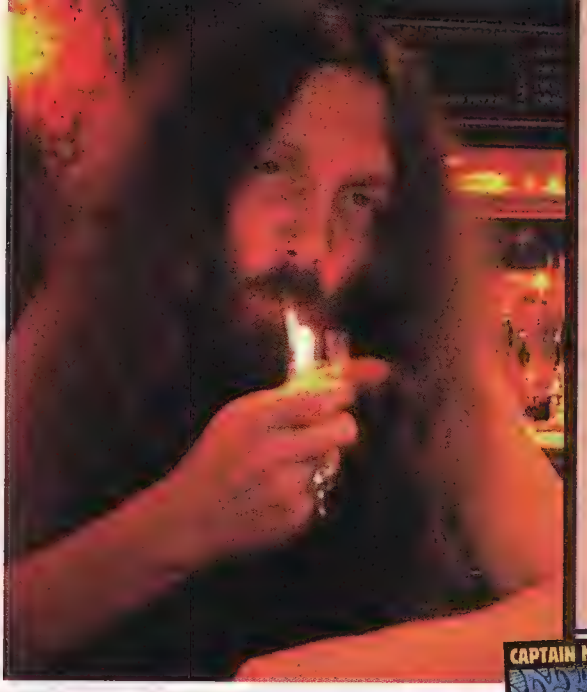

VITAL STATS

NAME: Alan Moore
OCCUPATION: Comic book writer
BORN: November 18, 1953 in Northampton, England
BASE OF OPERATIONS: Northampton, England
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Has won more than 20 awards since he landed on the comics scene in 1980. Became a superstar with his American comics debut on *Saga of the Swamp Thing* in 1983 and a bonafide legend with *Watchmen* in 1986, which many believe to be the best comic series ever done. Keeping a lower profile in the '90s, Moore recently launched his new comics line, America's Best Comics, from DC/WildStorm.
BEST "STRANGER THAN FICTION" MOMENT: "I was eating sandwiches at a restaurant in London; this was right after I created [*Swamp Thing*'s] John Constantine. I looked up, and walking by was a man who looked just like Constantine: the cigarette, the trench coat, everything. He looked at me, winked, nodded and turned the corner. It was a chilly moment. I could have followed him...but I decided to leave the café instead."

WIZARD: Over the years, your name has become synonymous with words like "genius," "visionary"...even "comic book god." But come on, man. You eat like everyone else. You take a crap like everyone else—

MOORE: And I put my pants on three legs at a time like everyone else. [*Laughs*] I live in Northampton, where everybody is familiar enough with my untidy and bumbling physical presence to dispel any illusions of deity. Nobody here treats me special, just how I like it.

The notion of celebrity after a while became horrible to me. Since the end of the '80s, I've kept a low profile. Before then, I'd go to conventions and was mobbed everywhere I went. Kids fainted—or had epileptic seizures—when they met me.

The convention experience was that bad for you?

Yeah. I went to one of the British conventions during the *Watchmen* boom, and it was certainly the most highly-attended British conventions; most came because of the press *Watchmen* was getting. This was a great moment of triumph for comics, mind you. But all I can remember of the entire convention was sitting in a bleak hospitality room, miserable, because I couldn't go out without attracting a mob. At one point, I was halfway up a stairwell—there was a two- or three-story drop beneath me—with 50 kids, all pressing forward. At the San Diego convention one year, I woke up screaming from a dream of clutching hands.

What do you do? I don't want to be the celebrity, the center of attention. Sometimes I find myself quite boring, believe it or not, and I don't want to dwell upon myself every single second of the day.

I'd rather my work maintain my only profile. It doesn't really matter to readers whether I exist or not, now does it? It's only the work. I don't want them to admire my haircut. I don't want them to admire my complexion or my trim physique. If they enjoy the story, then that's *great*. The contact between me and them has successfully been completed, you know?

What's your contact with DC these days? Although the company's publishing your new line of comics, there's no DC logo on any of the covers.

That's part of the deal [former WildStorm publisher] Jim Lee proposed [when DC acquired WildStorm last year]—that it would be possible to keep America's Best as far removed from DC as possible. There is nothing on the book that connects it to DC. I mean yes, at the end of the day, it's DC who's publishing these books. And yes, I would prefer it if it were otherwise. But it's a thing I can live with, and as long as we can keep this arm's-length relationship, there won't be any problems.

Is there any chance you'll be writing Swamp Thing or any other DC characters again?

I know fans would like to see that, but no. Even if my relationship with DC were different, I'm not sure I'd be interested in working on the characters anyway. They've seemed to change over the last 10 years, probably for the better, but they're not really the characters I want to work with anymore. I don't really have any nostalgic longings for them. I'm quite happy with the stuff I'm doing.

Let's talk about that. What was your overall plan for America's Best Comics when you conceived it?

There was a band over here in the '80s called Pop Will Eat Itself. That name was a great name, a prophetic name. Pop—whether it be popular music, culture or comics—comes to a point where it devours its own past to find something new. Comics have done that; my *Supreme* work [for Awesome Entertainment that aped Superman] is an example. What I wanted to do was avoid that in this line. So I asked myself, "Is there another way comics could have gone?"

To answer that, you have to trace comics' roots back to the point of which the modern superhero was born: Superman. If you go back to the stage right before that, you'll find pulp magazines and newspaper comic strips. The 19th-century fantasy novel. Mythology. Early science fiction. These were the things the comic grew out of. I've tried to return to that pre-Superman territory and extrapolate a different future from there.

They're the parallel world comic books, if you like. I'm just hoping there's a parallel world audience out there that's interested in reading them. [*Laughs*]

There are five ABC books debuting in the next few

months. [EDITOR'S NOTE: See sidebar.] Are there plans for any other titles?

There is a sixth book we're thinking of doing, one for artists who can't commit themselves to an ongoing strip, but who I would be mad not to work with. I've been talking to people like Dave Gibbons, Brian Bolland, Glenn Fabry. This is all very formulative right now; there's no schedule for it yet, but it's something we're planning for a few months down the line. We also have more six-issue stories planned for The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen.

Has it been difficult finding time to write all this stuff?

I enjoy doing it, frankly. I see this as kind of showing off a bit. "Hey, let's show off and dazzle the readers." I don't indulge myself that often, so what the hell.

You've been dazzling readers for about 20 years now. When it comes to having a "favorite writer," fans and comic book pros almost always drop your name. What's your reaction to that?

It's very nice, very flattering! It's nice to know I'm any help at all to my fellow creators—they can rest assured that they've been a help to me. As far as the fans still loving my work, I'm very grateful for it. I sort of wish...[*pauses*] that they had more choice.

What do you mean by that?

[*Pauses*] Remember, you're talking to Alan "Big in the '80s" Moore. *Watchmen* was more than 10 years ago. I don't want to sound rude or patronizing in any way, but I just wish that there had been...[*pauses again*]. I would have liked to have thought in the '80s that by now, there would have been some stuff that would have come along and made [*Watchmen*] forgotten. That would have been perhaps worse for me, but would have been better for the industry. But I'm not sure there's been work that's reached as far, or attempted as much.

And that's not to decry any of the work that's been along since, because there's been some very fine work. I don't know. I'm probably on very shaky ground and I'm probably being insulting to a lot of people's work. But anyway, that's my only regret. But it's very flattering that people still think very highly of my work.

So what the hell do you do when you're not writing comics?

Oooh. That's a good question. I've spent the last five years—and I've made no secret about this—being intensely committed to the study of magic and the occult.

ABC DEF JAM Moore revives characters of classic literature (opposite) in *League*, but starts fresh with Tom Strong (top) and Promethea (bottom).

ABC'S 1,2,3

When Alan Moore conceived his America's Best Comics line, he wanted "pre-Superman" heroes inspired by 19th-century literature, pulp magazines and mythology. Here, Moore introduces us to ABC's major players:

THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN

Set in 1898, this book stars characters of 19th-century fiction–folks like Mr. Hyde, the Invisible Man, Captain Nemo, Allan Quartermain–who all exist in the same world and team up to stop an international conspiracy.

TOM STRONG

Inspired by pulp icons like Doc Savage, Tom Strong is a hero who's battled evil since the beginning of the century. A bizarre supporting cast (including a talking monkey and a steam-powered butler) assists him through his exploits. "This stuff is fun. It's all shipwrecks and beautiful women and jungle kingdoms," Moore says.

TOP 10

Neopolis is a super city...literally. "Everyone in this book–the cabbies, the winos–are superheroes," Moore says. This May-shipping book's about Precinct 10, a police force created to take care of Neopolis' supercrime. Inspired by shows like "NYPD Blue," Moore's going to have several story lines going at once here.

PROMETHEA

Debuting in June, Promethea stars a warrior from the realm, Immateria. "Promethea is hard to describe without blowing the first few issues," Moore explains. "She's an embodiment of the human imagination. Promethea's a fiction who's somehow crossed over into our world. I want to babble her origin away, but that would spoil the readers' enjoyment."

TOMORROW STORIES

July's anthology features stories starring new heroes. The Spirit-like Greyshirt fights crime in the natural gas-powered Indigo City. Boy inventor Jack B. Quick spends his time building miniature solar systems and elevators to the moon. The bored, rich girl Cobweb fights crime for fun and, says Moore, "wears a transparent costume." ■ CH

Most of my life, I didn't have much sympathy for the occult. If you go into a lot of occult shops, you'll find people with yawning emotional gaps in their lives who try to cram them full with some outlandish belief system. But I started to look at people who I could not dismiss. People like Dr. John Dee, a man who invented the concept of the British Empire, wrote the definitive book on navigation and was Queen Elizabeth's court astrologer. A brilliant man in numerous respects. But he spent the last half of his life transcribing this strange stuff which he believed to be the "language of angels."

This is where everyone says, "That's when he went crazy."

Right. But I found it harder to dismiss. I thought it wasn't fair that this man was a genius apart from this stuff. I thought I should look at it a bit more closely. So, on my 40th birthday, I decided that rather than have a mid-life crisis, I'd do something a bit more mad. I decided to explore the ideas behind magic. To me, magic has an awful lot to do with creativity, and creativity has an awful lot to do with magic.

So if I wanted to find out more about creativity, I'd have to take that last step over the boundary of the rational.

What did you do?

I read lots of books. Studied. Tried to think my way into it. Then, doing a ritual with a friend of mine back in January '94, something happened, something difficult to describe in detail. There was some kind of influx of something, something...[*Pauses*] It happened to both of us at the same time. Bear in mind, I know this is *completely mad*. It can't possibly be so. But at the time, it felt something like a god—some extraordinary intelligence or consciousness—was rush

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HALF-LIFE

www.gameoftheyear.com
www.newline.com/jackiechan

MORE? Moore wants another *Watchmen* to come along. Maybe he never read *J2*?

ing through both of us.

I was completely stunned. I spent the next few days thinking, "Dare I tell anybody about this?" But I decided to go for it. People were a little worried at first, but they were also very curious because I was speaking with conviction. Now, some of them practice with me. [*Laughs*] Here's the subtext to my magical experience: I'm going mad, and I'm taking as many people with me as I can.

[*Laughs*] So, what do you practice?

Qabalah is one. It's part of the Western occult tradition. It includes all of the religious systems: Greek, Egyptian, Norse, Christian, it's all there. It's seen as a map of the universe on one level, but it's also seen as a map of you, the individual. I might do a ritual that involves the god Mercury. You can have a dialogue with that energy, that cluster of ideas we label with the name Mercury.

You've had a conversation with the god Mercury.

Maybe. During the experience, you believe you are actually talking to a god. Who's to say if you are, or if you're not? I've tried to keep an open mind about it. I tell myself, "On one level, this is a hallucination. This is an element of my own personality, some subconscious element of myself." On the other hand, I also have to allow that this might be something completely beyond my personality, a higher entity. I mean, if it barks like a god and smells like a god, it's probably a god. [*Laughs*]

[*Laughs*] At least you have a sense of humor about it.

You have to. Most of this is a lot less dramatic than you'd suppose. It's reading a bunch of books, and every three months or so, doing a working. We'll do a proper ritual working, something peculiar will happen, and then we'll get our strength back in a few months and do it again.

That dispels the image some readers have of you—that you're some kind of unapproachable "goth genius." I bet they get it from that black-and-white photo of you. You look dangerous.

[*Chuckles*] Ah, the photo. That's all [photographer] Mitch Jenkins. He always goes for the dark, scary look. I don't know. To me, my life is completely normal. I have no desire to have a dark allure. I have my hair like this because, frankly, I think it looks gorgeous. [*Laughs*] Those rolling, natural highlights, you know.

But I'm sure that looks dangerous to some people. And from experience, I know if they met me in some foggy circumstance, they'd find me a bit alarming.

You have a great "Alan Moore looks like the bogeyman" story, don't you?

[*Laughs*] I remember walking through a park here in Northampton—a park notorious for its muggings and the like—during a foggy night. I heard some guys coming, probably from the pub or something, and I knew our paths would intersect. They were loud and boisterous. We finally crossed paths in this fog, and they stopped dead in their tracks. I kept walking. Finally one of them gave this nervous laugh.

Did he say anything?

Yeah. He said, [*in a fearful voice*] "I didn't know what it was."

Kentucky-based writer Chris Hutchins once dabbled in magic. His severed torso has never been the same.

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DVD VIDEO

1999 SUMMER PREVIEW

A sneak peek at the storylines of this summer's hottest books

BY SCOUT ERICK AND JIM MOLDOVALIK

Days at the beach and golden tans just ain't what they used to be.

So if you're looking to stay inside this summer to maintain your doughy texture and pasty complexion, here's a tip: comic books! Yep, while other fools are getting water in their ears and sand in their trunks, you can be thrilling to Batman's fight to save Gotham and Wolverine's quest to get his adamantium back. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Take a look at yonder pages as *Wizard* lets you in on all sorts o' cool, inside information. We bet you'll *want* to catch up on your summer reading.

'Cause too much sun can give ya skin cancer.

COUNTDOWN TO WIZARD 2000

AVENGERS

CREATIVE TEAM: Kurt Busiek, George Pérez and Al Vey

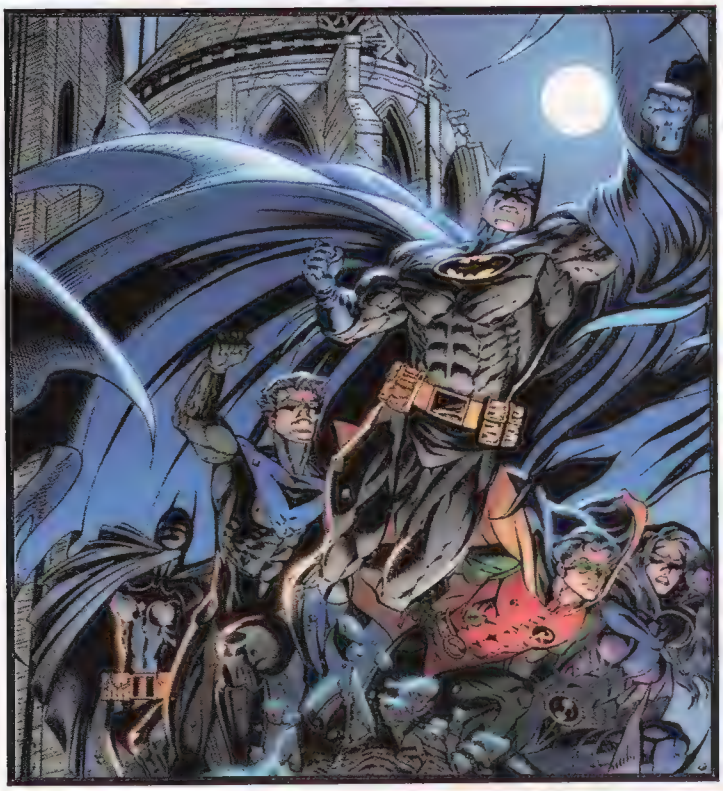
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Hawkeye bolted to lead the Thunderbolts, Wonder Man came fully back to life, and the Avengers banged heads with that wacky Wrecking Crew bunch.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Starting in *Avengers* #19, this summer's four-part storyarc, "Ultron Unlimited," features virtually everyone who's had even a loose connection to Ultron, including Giant-Man, the Wasp, Wonder Man, Vision, Scarlet Witch and the Grim Reaper. Heck, even the Black Panther shows up! There'll be enough members for two teams, and the Avengers are gonna need 'em all, 'cuz this time Ultron's out for blood. And he gets it by destroying an entire country!

DOWN THE ROAD: Once "Ultron Unlimited" finishes up, issue #23 focuses on Wonder Man and Vision, possibly delving into the love triangle created as both of them vie for Scarlet Witch's affections. After that, look for a two-parter guest-starring Juggernaut. He's not here as a villain, though—this time, Juggy's in trouble, and only the Avengers can help. Also look for a whole bunch o' new villains from September's Iron Man/Thor/Spider-Man crossover.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: It's been talked about for years, but now it's official: The Avengers are coming to TV! Look for the animated series to debut next season on Fox and a new action figure line from Toy Biz in the spring of 2000.

BATMAN BOOKS



CREATIVE TEAM: New creators rotate all year, every few issues

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Life in Gotham still sucks. The city remains a "No Man's Land," an earthquake-destroyed mess cut off from the U.S. and divided into small, gang-controlled territories.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Bats finally caves in and sends out for help. Nightwing, Robin, Azrael, Batgirl and even Catwoman are called in to become the "Batsquad" and help Bats maintain what control he can. On the villain front, Mr. Freeze, Clayface, Two-Face, Killer Croc and Bane will soon be a-makin' mayhem all over Gotham, and the oh-so-sexy Poison Ivy is due for a makeover. Not to mention the first in-continuity appearance of Harley Quinn in her own one-shot this June. Homina homina homina!

DOWN THE ROAD: It's all leading up to the big pay-off: The whole shootin' match—everything from the earthquake to Gotham's being cut off to the Penguin's black-market stranglehold over Gotham—is the work of a mysterious "outside interest" who'll be revealed in the last days of 1999. Come 2000? All bets are off. We could be looking at a new Gotham, a new Batman costume, or even new Batman titles.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Look for the mysterious Batgirl's identity to finally be revealed this June. And—get this—once she's exposed, an *all-new* Batgirl will hit the crimefighting scene!

BATTLE CHASERS

CREATIVE TEAM: Joe Madureira, Munier Sharrieff and Tom McWeeney

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: The gang's all here! Calibretto the war golem, Garrison the swordsman, Gully (the spunky li'l girl with amazing power gauntlets) and Knolan the wizard stand assembled as a mighty team of adventurers.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: The focus turns to bad guys, as the spotlight is cast on the many villains that inhabit the Battle Chasers' world. While some villains come a-lookin' to steal Gully's gauntlets, another villain (slated to appear in #7) is the bug-eyed, winning entry from *Wizard* #81's Battle Chasers contest. And over on the hero front, we start getting hints that Garrison might be more than just an expert fighter—he might have some sort of superpower, too.

DOWN THE ROAD: Garrison's mysterious past is explored as we find out why he took an oath to never take up his sword again. The kicker? Red Monika, the boobalicious mercenary, is somehow involved in the mystery. And it may be way down the road, but some new characters could be popping up.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Now that Cliffhanger is under the DC umbrella, look for tons o' Battle Chasers stuff—bookends and a PVC figure set are slated for late '99. And negotiations are almost finalized with a secret manufacturer to get Battle Chasers action figures on shelves by 2000.

DON'T DARE MISS THE...

OBESE MONSTROSITY

Lock the fridge and hide the children–ol' fatboy the Kingpin's back in town. He'll be tossin' his weight around this hot summer in the pages o' *Daredevil*. Just pray he doesn't wear a thong!

STUFF WE HATE

While the new millennium doesn't really start until 2001, we're joining the global, spring-cleaning masses and listing the 10 things that MUST be put to an end/beaten with hammers if mankind has any hope of embracing a utopian future.

10. **JAR JAR BINKS.** Didn't Lucas learn his lesson with "Jedi"? Cute for cute's sake just doesn't cut it. Go ask Wicket.
9. **OLD NAVY AND 10-10-32-WHATEVER COMMERCIALS.** Maybe they have subliminal messages built into them that drive us into blind rages of hate, or maybe they're just really stupid. Either way, no more.
8. **DENNIS RODMAN.**
7. **TEAM ROCKET.** Dude...those guys are bad news.
6. **"DA BOMB" OR "DA BOMB DIGGITY."** If you pepper your conversations with these two vile sayings, stop. If you're thinking of adding them, don't. They make you sound simple.
5. **COLE SLAW.**
4. **ALL THOSE NYC LAWS** that restrict porn.
3. **PIE JOKES.** Even *we're* sick of 'em.
2. **HERPES.**
1. **IRRESPONSIBLE COMIC CREATORS** who have no respect for the industry and even less for the fans who made them who they are. How many times does a reader have to hit a comic store, searching for the newest issue of your mag, only to learn it's been delayed...again? How long before they skip a week, knowing it probably didn't ship anyway? Then two weeks? Then passing on comics all together? It might sound corny, but this industry should have at least taught you that with great power comes great responsibility. Start showing some responsibility, guys...or at least some professionalism.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

CREATIVE TEAM: Mark Waid, Andy Kubert and Jesse Delperdang
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Iron Man retrieved Cap's indestructible shield only to have it shatter. And to stop the Cosmic Cube-powered Red Skull, Cap was forced to kill his old enemy and take on Korvac, the man...er, machine behind it all.
WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: A three-part, "Whatever happened to the old shield?" story kicks off in June; it's a major arc that'll finally address the authenticity of Cap's busted shield once and for all. And it seems his shield's fate is part of a much bigger picture. Apparently, its destruction kicked off a worldwide chain reaction that could culminate in one major explosion.
DOWN THE ROAD: In typical Boy-Scout-poster-child form, Cap might wind up having to sacrifice the remnants of his broken shield once again to save the world. The storyline guest-stars an amplified and less-goofy-looking Klaw. (Hopefully, that means a lot less pink...) Plus, there might be a new love interest for the Star-Spangled Avenger in the future.
THE INSIDE SCOOP: If you're a Cap fan, better start saving yer dough; Bowen Designs is due to release *two* Captain America statues late this year. Look for a limited-edition, WWII version with Cap's old, triangular shield as well as a Captain America statue where he's hefting his modern shield.

DANGER GIRL

CREATIVE TEAM: J. Scott Campbell, Andy Hartnell and Alex Garner
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: A mysterious organization's been gathering a slew of arcane antiquities that could spell world domination. Fear not, 'cause the three Danger Girl babes and super-spy Johnny Barracuda have been globe hopping to nab the relics themselves.
WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: *Danger Girl* #6 unveils more about this evil collection agency. Known as "The Hammer," they're a clandestine outfit bent on assembling a mystic suit of armor. The Girls infiltrate The Hammer's secret fortress, where we'll meet a few more majorly evil players. Issue #7, the story's climax, will feature 10 added pages. Seeing as how the first issue sported an extra 10 pages, the two issues will give the initial storyarc a nice, "bookends" kinda feel.
DOWN THE ROAD: The new Danger Girl everyone's been hearing about (You have heard about the new Danger Girl, haven't you?) won't show up for a while yet. Look for the newest member to debut in issue #8, kicking off the book's second storyarc. Also look for the *Danger Girl Summer Special* around August, with work by Art Adams and Joe Chiodo.
THE INSIDE SCOOP: Expect two Danger Girl presents under your Christmas tree (or...uh...Hanukkah bush) this year! McFarlane Toys' gorgeous Danger Girl action figures and the pixelated Danger Girl video game are both due out by December. And if you're lucky, a collected edition of the first *DG* storyarc could be in yer mitts before year's end.

DAREDEVIL

CREATIVE TEAM: David Mack, Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: DD's just buried his longtime girlfriend Karen Page, but she was smart enough to have a nice, fat life insurance policy! So Matt Murdock used the money to rebuild his old brownstone apartment. Oh, yeah—Matt's got a new love interest, too.
WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: DD's longtime foe, the Kingpin, is comin' a-knockin', and he's brought help. Echo's her name, and she's a baddie the Kingpin's been bringin' up wrong. Seems she's got the ability to "echo" any movement she sees, and duplicate it perfectly. Thing is, she's deaf—so ol' blind Hornhead just might feel a twinge of sympathy for her.
DOWN THE ROAD: Even though the "Marvel Knights" deal that *Daredevil* is published under only runs through issue #12, the current storyarc runs through #14. But renewal or no, the current crew will finish the storyarc. And the Kingpin? He's gonna be changed in a *major* way, and those changes will play a prominent role in upcoming stories over in the Spider-Man titles.
THE INSIDE SCOOP: If the "Knights" deal gets renewed, the whole crew pinky-swears that acclaimed screenwriter (and *Daredevil* #1-#8 scribe) Kevin Smith will be back. "Back to the Future" screenwriter Bob Gale ("Batman: No Man's Land") is also interested in taking a writing poke at *Daredevil*. And Smith's initial *DD* run is definitely slated for a collected edition.

FANTASTIC FOUR

CREATIVE TEAM: Chris Claremont, Salvador Larroca and Art Thibert
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Marvel's first family has been doin' some traveling in a not-so-friendly vacation spot called the "Negative Zone." As they finally make it back Earthside, they land in Paris...
WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: ...and Paris is in ruins, courtesy of the Ruined, the villains introduced in *Fantastic Four* (vol. 3) #1. After a little Parisian tussle (where not *nearly* enough Frenchmen perish), the FF skedaddle over to the *Fantastic Four 1999* annual, where an all-new, all-different Defenders team is introduced! Shortly thereafter, a new Marvel Girl debuts, but this girlie looks like the Invisible Woman, dresses like Dr. Doom and has a past that involves both of 'em!
DOWN THE ROAD: She-Hulk and Spider-Man will make brief guest appearances, and the FF will even take on the Mad Thinker and the Red Skull at a certain, well-known comic convention in San Diego. And by November's double-sized #25, writer Chris Claremont promises "There will be a fundamental change in the team. They'll still be the Fantastic Four...but not the same Fantastic Four they have been."
THE INSIDE SCOOP: Look for the FF to play a major role in a massive Marvel crossover tentatively titled "The Domination Factor," slated for late '99. And is that Dr. Doom we see on the horizon? Sure looks like him. After a two-year layoff, the FF's main adversary should be back right around the turn of the new year.

DON'T DARE MISS THE...

DEAD FRENCH PEOPLE

Hey, have you heard France's official slogan? "We surrender!" Bwah hah hah. Yeah, everyone's got some beef with the Frogs, but that's why this summer's *Fantastic Four* should rock! Seems the FF return to Earth and land in a completely destroyed Paris! Au revoir, Frenchies!

BAD BOYS

10 Bad Guys who don't take no guff in '99

MAGNETO–This mutant master of magnetism ain't content tossing around tin cans and Colossus. This summer, he rules the nation of Genosha in the palm of his hand, giving the X-Men more ulcers than ever.

ULTRON–Finally, this killer robot made of indestructible adamantium actually DOES something this summer: He destroys an entire country before the Avengers can slag 'im.

VENOM–Good guy, our ass. Spider-Man's nemesis returns as the nut job he started out as. Armed with an alien symbiotic costume and the knowledge that Peter Parker is Spidey, expect him to strike at Spidey through his loved ones.

KINGPIN–Eight years in the making, Marvel's tubbiest crime lord finally returns to squash the one guy who took him down: Daredevil.

PROMETHEUS–Okay, so the guy got taken out by a nutshot the first time 'round. It's been hinted he might kill a JLAer before Mageddon does. Speaking o' which...

MAGEDDON–This ancient weapon of mass destruction will weed out the lamer JLA members later in the summer. (Steel, anyone?)

HARLEY QUINN–Joker's sidekick (and overall hottie) makes the leap from the Batman cartoon series to the comic books in July. 'Bout time.

JUGGERNAUT–He's big, unstoppable and has a wok for a helmet. This summer, he targets the Avengers. He says he doesn't wanna fight, but c'mon, when does *that* ever happen?

JOKER–Comics' giddiest homicidal maniac reunites with the superhero whose career he ended with a bullet to the spine: former Batgirl Barbara Gordon.

GOD–Believe it. *Preacher*'s Almighty has deserted his post in Heaven and wants series star the Rev. Jesse Custer–the only guy who can put God in his place–to stay the hell outta his way! The moral of the story: don't mess with the Man.

DON'T DARE MISS THE...

ROBOT SEX

Looks like Iron Man's got himself into the robotic porn business. This summer, he catches up with Jocasta, the former Mrs. Ultron. But all that's left of her is an armored head. Now what's Iron Man gonna do with an armored head?

MORE SUMMER LOVIN'

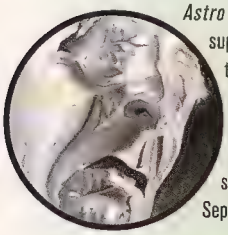
AQUAMAN

The guy who took away Aquaman's hand is back, and this time Piranha Man is gonna steal his telepathic powers as well. As Dolphin and Tempest get married, Aquaman is back on speaking terms with his former bride Mera.

ASCENSION

Lucien and Andromeda have been changed by their contact with a parallel dimension, and now they're stuck there. But during their search for home, they find that the Dayak and Minean races aren't the only inhabitants of this strange otherworld.

ASTRO CITY



The multi-part Steeljack storyline continues in *Astro City* #18, as an ex-supervillain tries to solve the murders of a bunch o' small-time hoods. If scheduling goes according to plan, Steeljack should wrap things up by September's #20.

BIRDS OF PREY

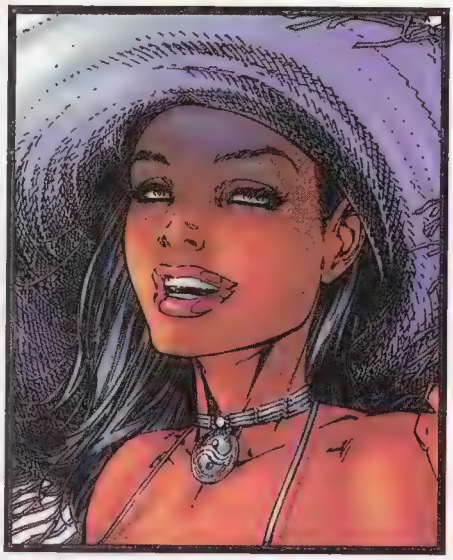
A mysterious nemesis with some pretty strong ties to Darkseid shows up in July and winds up dragging Black Canary and Catwoman to Apokolips. After that, at long last, Barbara Gordon confronts the man who shattered her spine...the Joker!

BONE

The third and final (!) act of *Bone* gets underway in late '99 as Fone Bone and his quasi-girlfriend Thorn race to the ancient city of Atheia in search of the secret entrance to the underworld of the dragons.

cont. on page 52

FATHOM



CREATIVE TEAM: Michael Turner, Bill O'Neil, Joe Weems and Jason Gorder
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Marine biologist Aspen Matthews is quickly getting hip to the fact that maybe she oughtta be studying herself. Strange, water-based powers are manifesting themselves, and she's getting visits from no less than two mysterious undersea races.
WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Since Deep Marine Discovery—the research facility that Aspen worked at—got blowed up real good, we'll see the building of a new and improved DMD. Meanwhile, one of the undersea races seems to be taking a real nasty attitude, killing people on the surface. The other race? They seem to know a *lot* about Aspen's mysterious past, and they're even willing to share a little.
DOWN THE ROAD: All the questions about Aspen's heritage and the extent of her powers should be answered by #9 and the end of the first storyarc. After that, expect a stand-alone issue or two that'll probably be a bit on the humorous side. And as the second major storyarc hits, we finally see just where Aspen came from...and what it looks like.
THE INSIDE SCOOP: As of July's #7, expect a new issue of *Fathom* every five weeks, with guaranteed shipping. And did we mention Aspen might encounter a video game archaeologist who packs a mean set of weapons in her costume? Yep, we're talking Lara Croft, Tomb Raider! Look for a crossover in 2000. Not to mention the animated "Fathom" movie in the works with Fox, slated for a 2002 release.

FLASH

CREATIVE TEAM: Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn, Paul Pelletier and Vince Russell
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Cobalt Blue, the Silver Age Flash's evil, long-lost brother, tried to kill Barry Allen in the 30th century, preventing Barry from saving the universe in "Crisis on Infinite Earths" and thus altering reality. The current Flash and his speedster pals sprinted through time to stop him.
WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: After the major climax to "Chain Lightning," look for a fill-in issue looking back at Wally West's early career. Guest-starring Robin and Aqualad, it's an attempt to thwart a Gorilla City invasion of the good ol' U.S. of A. Next up, look for a major infusion to Flash's rogues gallery. Waid has apparently created some brand-new Flash villains using cutting-edge technology and high-fallutin' science. Oh, and did we forget to mention that there's a complete makeover in the works, including a brand-new Flash with an all-new look? Check out this month's "Wizard News" for details.
DOWN THE ROAD: Flash's long-lost wife Linda Park is still missing, and yes, that'll get dealt with in upcoming issues. Also, it's been hinted that Linda ain't the mother of Wally's future kids (as seen in last year's "Kingdom" event). Uh-uh. Seems it's police scientist Angela Margolin.
THE INSIDE SCOOP: This summer's *The Brave and the Bold*, the follow-up to last year's *JLA: Year One*, will be a 12-issue mini-series featuring the Silver Age versions of Flash and Green Lantern. Each issue will be set one year after the previous one and will examine how their friendship grew throughout their crimefighting careers.

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DON'T DARE MISS THE...

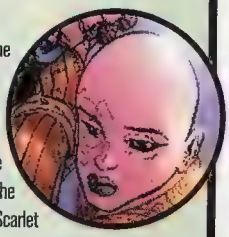
THREESOME ACTION!!!

Sigh. It's every guy's fantasy: two girls at once. Well, this summer, young stud and Green Lantern Kyle Rayner could dare to live the Dream. So what if one o' the gals has green skin and the other's kind of a clone? It's the Dream, man!

CABLE

Issue #70 features a huge turning point in Cable's relationship with Stacy, as well as a long-overdue confrontation with a sinister supporting character. And of course, there's that whole Apocalypse millennium thing waiting in the wings.

CRIMSON



As the war between the Templar Knights and the Creatures of the Night heats up, the Templars become the parent organization of the Red Hood, which puts Scarlet in command of some serious SOBs.

DEADPOOL

A well-known character from Deadpool's past returns for revenge. There'll be major revelations about Deadpool's pre-mercenary days, as well as the return of a few popular supporting characters.

DARKNESS

It's road trip time, as that Darkness-wielding Jackie Estacado heads to Las Vegas to stop an evil entity who's been livin' the high life as...Jackie Estacado! Then pack yer bags, 'cause it's off to Russia to rescue the imprisoned manservant Wenders.

DIVINE RIGHT

Turn out the lights, the party's over! "Divine Intervention," a four-part saga including Max Faraday's meetings with Gen^{13} and the Wildcats, solves the mystery of the "creation equation" and ends the series, most likely by year's end. But look for possible *Divine Right* spinoffs in 2000.

GAMBIT

Gambit's teammates show up as part of this summer's major X-Men crossover. And then look for Sgt. Fury and his Howling Commandos to make an appearance.

GEN^{13}

Come September, a spankin'-new bad guy will harass the Gen^{13} teens every issue for six months in a row.

cont. on page 54

GREEN LANTERN

CREATIVE TEAM: Ron Marz, Darryl Banks, Terry Austin and Georges Jeanty

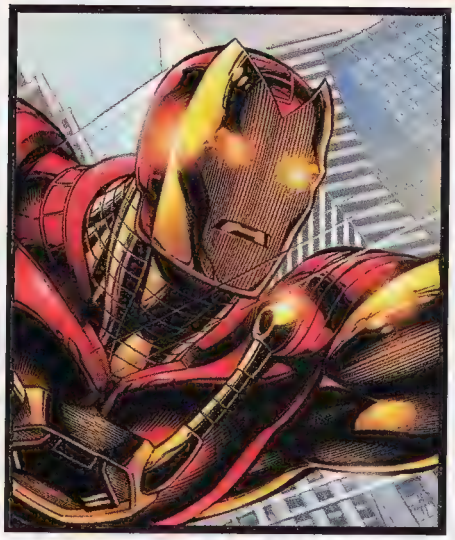
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: After unsuccessfully trying to restore the Green Lantern Corps, Kyle returned to Earth to save his gal Jade from the villainess Fatality. In battle, however, Jade lost her power ring, kicking things back to the status quo.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: June's *Green Lantern* #115 begins a two-part story where Kyle plays straight man to Booster Gold and Plastic Man's hijinks. In #117, an old Manhunter robot turns up and threatens New York just as Kyle has his very first gallery showing of artwork. And then, longtime GL fans can rejoice as Donna Troy returns to the book, creating quite the love triangle between herself, Kyle and Jade. And don't expect a quick resolution to this one!

DOWN THE ROAD: Donna's return coincides with DC's summer crossover event "Day of Judgment," while October's *Green Lantern* #119 deals with its aftermath. And word on the street is that following "Day of Judgment," a certain Hal Jordan will be walking the Earth, though most likely not as a Green Lantern.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: With the success of the previous Green Lantern ring, another one may be just on the horizon. And fans of Hal Jordan can look forward to a Mego-styled Silver Age Green Lantern action figure this summer. Standing some 9 inches tall, Jordan comes with a cloth costume and tons of articulation.

IRON MAN



CREATIVE TEAM: Kurt Busiek (plots), Roger Stern (co-plots, dialogue), Sean Chen, Larry Stucker and Pat Zircher

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Ever since he discovered his armor was literally killing him, Tony Stark's been wearing a bigger, more heavily padded version of the old red and yellow design. And good thing too, 'cause the underpants-wearin' Fin Fang Foom was recently back in town.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Continuing the three-part "Machinery of War" storyline from May's *Iron Man* #18, look to learn the new War Machine's identity and find out just why Tony's been avoiding Sunset Bain (the woman funding the new War Machine) since the series' first issue. All that, and Jocasta rears her armored head, as well. Of course, that's pretty much all she's got to rear these days, since her body was blown up years ago...

DOWN THE ROAD: In September, a four-part story taking place in *Iron Man*, *Thor*, *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* and an as-yet-unnamed one-shot will introduce a ton of new villains whose roots go back to the early days of the Marvel Universe. Warbird will be involved, and that nutty occult guy Dr. Strange makes a cameo too.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Wondering who's behind all the assassination attempts on Tony's life that've been going on since *Iron Man* (vol. 3) #1? Then check out June's *Iron Man Annual* by Busiek and Joe Casey for the definitive answer. It features the return of a legendary (and long-dead) Avengers villain, Count Nefaria!

SUMMER EXCLUSIVES FROM *JAY COMPANY* COMICS!

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DON'T DARE MISS THE...

DEAD PORN STAR

Y'know, we *still* haven't forgiven Karen Page for selling out DD's secret identity years ago when she was in porn and strung out on smack. And now DD's gal-pal has gotten hers, courtesy of Bullseye. The kicker? She had a life insurance policy, and ol' DD's charitably using the dough to...rebuild his apartment.

On the personal front, Fairchild falls in love, and team mentor John Lynch realizes he's really gotta go easier on the kids. The jerk.

HITMAN

Tommy Monaghan and his rival assassin Ringo Chen have a major falling out over, yep, a woman. Expect lots of bullets and cussin'. Later, Tommy takes on (no joke) a pack of dinosaurs!

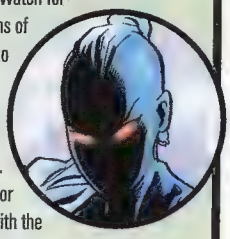
HULK

Watch for old Green Jeans to hang in the wilderness through around issue #12, and take on Earth's Mightiest Heroes, the Avengers! Plus, a Thing/Hulk throwdown is practically a lock for the near future.

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES

In June, Sensor gets thrown into a secret prison where she'll meet Gear, a completely organic machine who'll likely become a Legionnaire. In July, M'onel and Apparition reminisce about one of their 20th-century missions in an issue paying homage to the old L.E.G.I.O.N. series.

MUTANT X



When the Goblin Queen storyline plays out this July, certain members of the Six will bolt, as new members take their place. Watch for more alternate versions of Marvel characters to show up, including Doctor Doom, who plays a significant role in issue #12. Later this year, look for *Mutant X* to interact with the Marvel Universe.

NIGHTWING

Nightwing heads back to Gotham this July to help Batman reclaim the city. After trying to single-

cont. on page 56

JLA

CREATIVE TEAM: Grant Morrison, Howard Porter and John Dell

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: The 14-member JLA has been be-boppin' across the multiverse, fighting off an invasion from the fifth dimension. They stand ever vigilant, ready to protect Earth from huge menaces and unclog the occasional stopped-up drain.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: How 'bout all-out war? In an effort to wreak as much havoc as inhumanly possible, a living weapon from about a billion years ago named "Mageddon" hits Earth and busts open a supervillain prison. An all-new Injustice Gang forms, and Prometheus, the perfect killer, shows up. End result? The entire JLA (and maybe even a few other assorted DC heroes) get sucked into a *massive* conflict! And Morrison keeps hinting that he'll kill a member or two before he departs the title...

DOWN THE ROAD: Good-bye, Grant Morrison. Hello, Mark Waid! Just after the turn of the millennium, Waid jumps on board as the new *JLA* writer. He plans a team half the size of the current squad. So expect a tighter, seven- or eight-member League...and possibly some romance brewing between Aquaman and Wonder Woman.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Word on the street is that *JLA: Superpower*, a fall one-shot written by *Major Bummer*'s John Arcudi, will put a new member in the League. Also, be on the lookout later in the year for the *JLA: Prime Evil* one-shot and the ever-lovin' *JLA/Witchblade* crossover.

PREACHER

CREATIVE TEAM: Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Having cleaned up the tiny town of Salvation, Texas, Preacher Jesse Custer has turned in his sheriff's badge. He's now on a road trip to New York, hoping to meet up with his long-lost girlfriend, Tulip.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Hey! It's the long-anticipated reunion of Jesse and Tulip! As Preacher and his assassin girlfriend get back together, Jesse turns an eye (well, his *only* eye) toward Cassidy. Cass *was* Jesse's best friend...but he's also been Tulip's recent boyfriend. Jesse digs into Cass' shrouded past. Meanwhile, Herr Starr consolidates his control over the Grail, the double-secret organization that controls the bloodline of Christ, and we learn more of the Grail's secret history.

DOWN THE ROAD: The Jesse/Tulip reunion and Starr's struggle with the Grail set the stage for big, *big* things. Remember the Alamo? Jesse Custer sure will, as the "Alamo" storyline is set to bring down the curtain on the *Preacher* series sometime in 2000. The unkillable Saint of Killers is headin' back, and no less a presence than God himself is scheduled to appear! Yowza!

THE INSIDE SCOOP: What a world we live in! A Preacher action figure is due by August, followed by a seven-piece Preacher PVC figure set featuring the whole gang. And *Preacher: Tall in the Saddle* is shaping up as a November one-shot, with a flashback tale of Jesse and Tulip.

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DON'T DARE MISS THE...

MOST F---ED-UP TEAM-UP

Cerebus was in *Spawn*. The Avengers hung with David Letterman. Heck, even Archie met the Punisher. Well, this summer, add another wacky team-up to the pile when the Ragin' Cajun Gambit meets...Sgt. Fury and his Howling Commandos? Hoo boy.

handedly wrest control of Blackgate Prison from Lock-Up, Nightwing reunites with two old flames, Huntress and Barbara Gordon. Back in Blüdhaven, Blockbuster looks for a heart transplant donor–kind of a tall order for a 1,000-pound guy.

RISING STARS

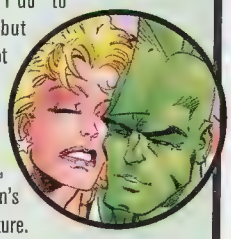
What happens when 113 superpowered kids grow up together in a small town called Pederson, Ill.? Blood, fire and gnashing of teeth. "Babylon 5" creator J. Michael Straczynski will tell ya all about it as you follow the lives and loves of his 113 *Rising Stars*.

ROBIN

July's *Robin* #68 begins the three-issue arc "War Beneath the Streets." Gotham's got an urban legend–a storehouse of food and medicine hidden beneath the streets. Robin's mission: find out if it's real and retrieve it. He battles Ratcatcher, Mr. Freeze, and a small army of maniacs down in Gotham's sewers.

SAVAGE DRAGON

The Dragon says "I do" to Jennifer Murphy, but wedded bliss may not be in the cards–the Covenant of the Sword are still out there somewhere, and they have Dragon's love child from Rapture.



SLINGERS

The Slingers–Dusk, Hornet, Prodigy and Ricochet–go to hell. Literally. Seems their mysterious benefactor the Black Marvel made a deal with the devil, and now that deal is due.

SPIDER-GIRL

Things get strained when Spider-Girl May Parker splits from Darkdevil, her superhero teacher. Later, things get strange as

cont. on page 58

SPAWN BOOKS

CREATIVE TEAM: Brian Holguin, Greg Capullo and Chance Wolf (*Spawn*); Paul Jenkins and Dwayne Turner (*Spawn: The Undead*)

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: One of Spawn's earliest victims, serial killer Billy Kincaid, has escaped from Hell and is wreaking havoc on Earth. Over in *Undead*, Spawn's out to define just who and what he is.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: June sees the conclusion of the Billy Kincaid saga, in which Spawn'll have to face the consequences of all the killing he's done in the last 80 issues or so. Turns out our bloodthirsty hero may just realize his actions made things worse, not better. Spawn's also gonna face giving up any hope of being Al Simmons again—being Spawn may be his only option. As for *Spawn: The Undead*, this all-new, ongoing series takes a much-more-adult look at our pizza-faced antihero. Expect self-contained tales in the series' first year, as Spawn attempts to interact with normal people's lives in a way he's never done before.

DOWN THE ROAD: Hell's Belles, three immortal pagan goddesses who appeared in *Spawn: The Dark Ages*, will be showing up in *Spawn*. And much further down the road, Spawn may have to start looking for a method of salvation. After *Undead*'s first year, Spawn will establish himself firmly outside the normal conventions of Good and Evil. You might just see some Major Powers showing up to woo him back to either side.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Before *Spawn*'s 100th issue, look for a MAJOR surprise—something that'll rock Spawn's world like nothing before.

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS

CREATIVE TEAM: Howard Mackie, John Byrne and Scott Hanna (*Amazing Spider-Man*); Mackie, John Romita Jr. and Hanna (*Peter Parker: Spider-Man*)

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Peter Parker is still Spider-Man...but he ain't lettin' his wife, Mary Jane, know that. The fact that Peter's living a lie is weighing on his soul and causing some strife in his marriage. Meanwhile, Mary Jane's been getting mysterious—and *very* disturbing—phone calls.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: MJ starts to suspect that the phone calls are coming from an old Spider-enemy, but she'll be damned if she's gonna tell Peter—she doesn't want to do *anything* that'll get him back in tights. Too bad, 'cause she's also gonna have her hands full with another vicious villain: Venom! He's back, and he's BAD! Yep, Spidey's opposite number is back, and he ain't playin' the good-guy routine anymore.

DOWN THE ROAD: The origin retelling in *Spider-Man: Chapter One* comes into play in current Marvel continuity, as someone seems to be hunting down the survivors of the accident that resulted in Spider-Man's creation. Meanwhile, the *Chapter One*-revamped Doctor Octopus makes his return, and Spidey gets involved with vampires! Think Morbius the living vampire and Marvel movie hero Blade will be entering the picture? You better believe it.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Spidey-mania is coming! The whole legal mumbo jumbo surrounding the Spidey motion picture has been cleared up, and now Marvel and Sony are working their buns off to get Web-head to the big screen! Plus, look for an all-new "Spidey Unlimited" animated series this fall.

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DON'T DARE MISS THE...

LARD-CLOGGED ARTERIES

Blüdhaven's 8,000-pound behemoth crimelord, Blockbuster, may have met his match. Nope, it ain't Nightwing. Try a bucket o' fried chicken! Seems ol' Blocky's desperately in need of a heart transplant. Good luck findin' one the size of a basketball!

develops an all-new and unique power. Then things get downright funky as Peter Parker, the original Spider-Man, swings back into action!

STARMAN

After spending months in outer space, Jack Knight finally meets previous Starman Will Payton. Upon returning home, Jack teams up with his father's old comrades in the new Justice Society of America.

STRANGERS IN PARADISE

It's "flashback" season as we finally get the back-story of David, the guy who's always hangin' around best buddies Francine and Katchoo. And we *finally* get to see the incident that split the gals up.

SUPERGIRL

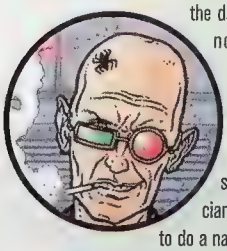
Supergirl, being an Earth-born angel, gets sucked into DC's all-encompassing "Day of Judgment" battle between Heaven and Hell in a *major* way. Later, she'll be forced to rescue Comet from the clutches of the Carnivore.

TITANS

Jesse Thunder makes an appearance in issue #7, while former Titan Raven shows up in issue #9 as part of DC's summer crossover event, "Day of Judgment."

TRANSMETROPOLITAN

Single-issue, self-contained stories are the order of the day as the life of take-no-crap newspaper columnist Spider Jerusalem goes down the toilet, toot-sweet. He's made enemies of some powerful politicians, and they're looking to do a nasty on him.



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SUPERMAN BOOKS

CREATIVE TEAM: Various until October; from October on, Joe Kelly and German Garcia (*Action Comics*); Stuart Immonen and Mark Millar (*Adventures of Superman*); Jeph Loeb and Ed McGuinness (*Superman*); Mark Schultz and Doug Mahnke (*Superman: The Man of Steel*)

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Overwhelmed by a rash of worldwide disasters, Supes dumped his Clark Kent persona so he could devote every waking hour to averting catastrophe. A little run-in with his JLA pals helped convince him there's foul play behind it all.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Get ready for a shake-up! New creators hop on board in October. Wanna know what they're gonna do? So do we. But since they ain't talkin', you'll have to be content with a few four-part crossovers to run throughout each title before then. In one of 'em, no joke, Superman actually learns judo!

DOWN THE ROAD: In *Superman*, Loeb plans to up the ante in terms of villains, focusing on high-octane bad guys who pose a serious threat to Superman's life. Over in *Action*, Kelly says he wants to feature guest-appearances by...well, most of the DC Universe. He'll also bring his signature, lighthearted, storytelling style to the title.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: There's a ton of Supes product hitting shelves this summer. Check out *Superman: The Odyssey*, a one-shot focusing on Clark Kent before he became Superman, and catch the Superman of the future's return in a one-shot *One Million 80-Page Giant*.

THOR

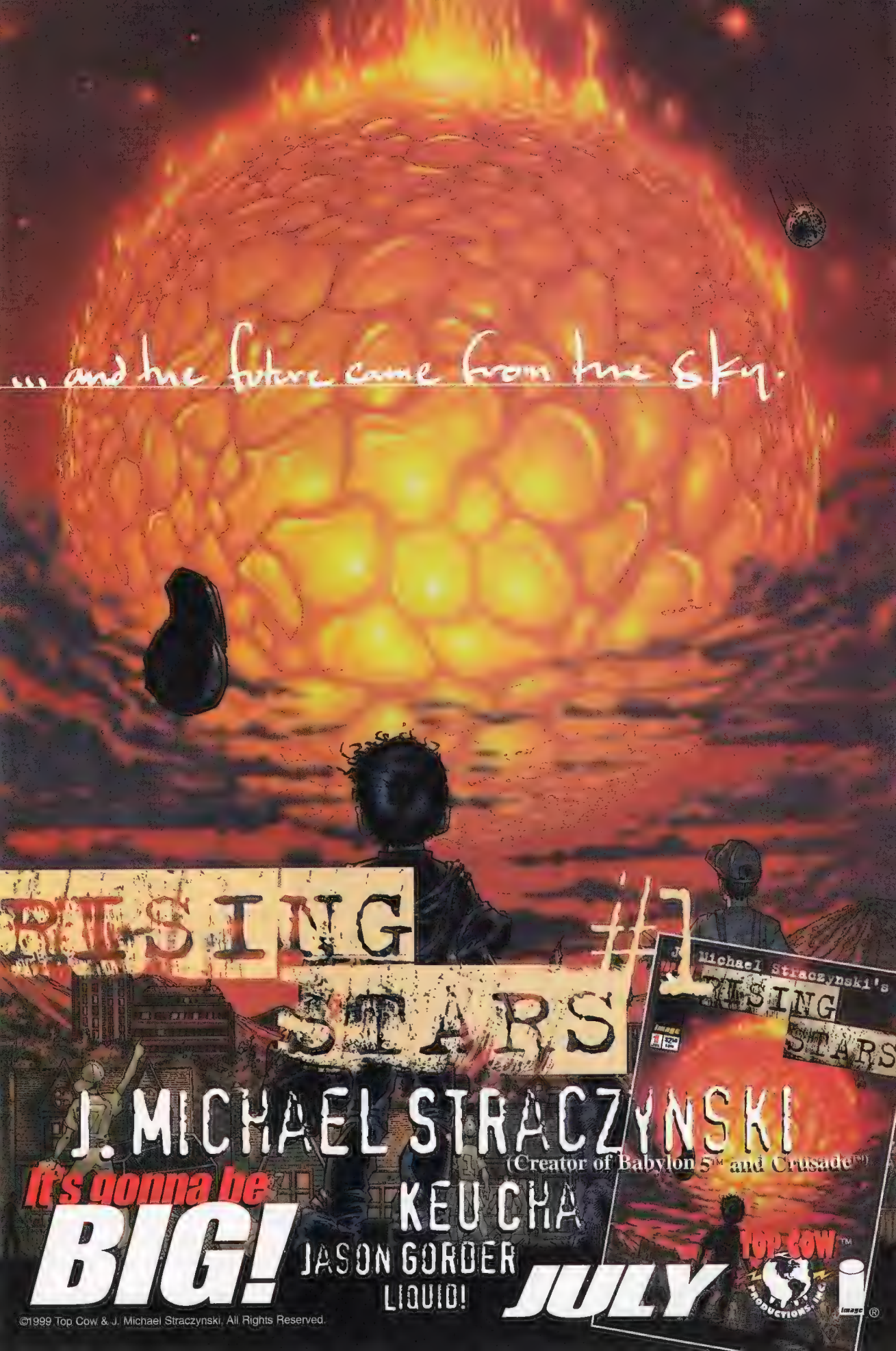
CREATIVE TEAM: Dan Jurgens, John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: After a year-long struggle, Asgard's finally back in the hands of the Norse gods, being rebuilt. And Marnot, the nasty-bad villain who bonded Thor to new mortal alter ego Jake Olson, has been defeated.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Thor teams up with Iron Man to whup the crud out of the Absorbing Man and Titania, then turns to matters close at hand—or more correctly, *in* hand. Know how Thor's hammer, the sacred Mjolnir, has been acting pretty wacky lately? Well, it seems there's an actual presence living *inside* the hammer! And it ain't exactly what you'd call "friendly." Look for a multi-issue epic that solves the Mjolnir mystery.

DOWN THE ROAD: Things on the civilian side of life get worse. Seems drugs have turned up missing in various hospitals, and paramedic Jake Olson is taking the fall! Jake gets busted, but it looks like his paramedic partner might have been doing the stealing. A four-part crossover story involving *Thor*, *Iron Man*, *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* and a book to be determined is on the plate for late '99, just before a boatload of classic Thor villains show up to do generally villainous things.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Buzz on the streets of Hollywood is that if the upcoming Avengers cartoon hits big, Thor just might be the next Marvel hero to get the animated treatment. And keep your eyes peeled for a kick-ass Thor statue scheduled for August from Bowen Designs.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DON'T DARE MISS...

WAXING THE DOLPHIN

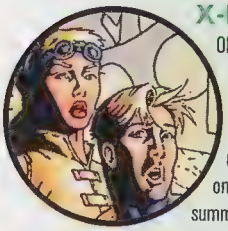
Poor Aquaman. The fish-guy can hardly pick his nose anymore, thanks to the meddling of that bastard formerly known as Charybdis, now called Piranha Man. Well, this summer, the man who "handed" it to Aquaman returns. And chances are he ain't back to hear the sound of one hand clapping...

USAGI YOJIMBO

After Usagi solves the mystery of the Inn at Moonshadow Hill, issue #32 focuses on Chizu, head of the ninja clan. Watch for another Usagi tale in this year's *Trilogy Tour Book*, due out in July.

VAMPIRELLA

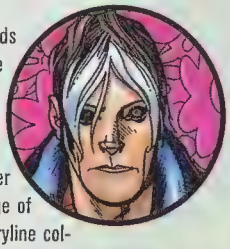
The fur flies and it's catfight time as that sultry Pantha invades Vampirella's turf. And speaking of sultry, Vampi's original costume (Mmmmm...) returns just in time for Vampi's 30th anniversary this fall.



X-FORCE

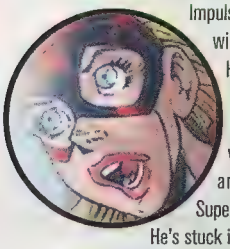
Old *X-Men 2099* villain Halloween Jack makes his way into official X-Men continuity when he takes on X-Force. Later this summer, the kids travel to Genosha to confront their old headmaster: Magneto, Master of Magnetism!

X-MAN



Nate Grey spends some quality time with his "parents," Cyclops and Phoenix, when yet another piece of the "Age of Apocalypse" storyline collides with the Marvel Universe. As a result of their mission together, Nate winds up with much stronger ties to the X-Men. But don't count on them lasting very long.

YOUNG JUSTICE



Impulse, Robin and Superboy wind up in an alternate Hell called "Dante's Disco Inferno" where they get turned into evil versions of themselves and run up against Supergirl. And Red Tornado? He's stuck in jail! ■

THUNDERBOLTS

CREATIVE TEAM: Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley and Scott Hanna

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: In order to prove the team's good intentions, Mach I turned himself over to the authorities to pay for his crimes as the Beetle, while the rest of the team hunted down the Crimson Cowl's new Masters of Evil.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: The current storyarc sees Archangel and Machine Man guest star as the 'Bolts take on Graviton. When last we saw him, the Thunderbolts convinced Graviton he was a loser, a villain without a purpose. Well, he went out and got one, and the team ain't happy about it! It's a storyline chock full o' subplots and secrets.

DOWN THE ROAD: Come August and September, Busiek will reveal more about new 'Bolts member Charcoal's origin, as the villains who set him up on the wrong side of the law become central to the story. It's all part of a cool conspiracy that'll spell trouble for the team. And in October, Abe Jenkins (a.k.a. Mach I) returns in a way fans ain't expecting.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Busiek and company have been dropping hints that something weird's going on—things ain't what they seem at Thunderbolts headquarters. Look for all that to get addressed in *Thunderbolts* #33. Plus, rumors are a-flyin' that Toy Biz may be hard at work on Thunderbolts action figures. Unfortunately, nothing has been officially announced as of yet.

WITCHBLADE

CREATIVE TEAM: David Wohl, Christina Z., Randy Green and D-Tron

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Police detective Sara Pezzini is back in control of the mystical Witchblade gauntlet, but there's a twist—immortal enemy Kenneth Irons has placed a new gem into the Witchblade. And you just *know* that can't be a good thing!

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Nope. It's not a good thing. The energy of the new Witchblade gem awakens a dangerous presence for Sara to deal with. After that, the Witchblade gets even funkier and unleashes a brand-new power. And Sara's new police partner, Eric Sketh, sure seems inquisitive about something he's heard about called a "Witchblade." Could he be on to Sara's secrets? Or maybe gathering information for the enemy? Hmmm.

DOWN THE ROAD: Sara has a run-in with the double-secret government folks of Level 42. And Sara's former partner Jake McCarthy digs up some weird, spooky info about Gavin Taylor, head of the cultish First Church of Holy Prosperity. Turns out ol' Gavin might not even be human. And now that Irons is pulling Gavin's strings, things just got double-bad for Sara.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Better start reading up on the quarterly *Tales of the Witchblade*. Events there in the summer will have a big impact in the monthly *Witchblade* this fall. And look for another Witchblade/Darkness tussle late in '99, bringing the two eternal forces into conflict with one another.

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DON'T DARE MISS...

BATGIRL'S BACK!

The babe formerly known as Batgirl (that'd be Barbara Gordon) gets to the punch line this summer in *Birds of Prey*. The wheelchair-bound former hero finally meets up with the kook who shattered her spine: the Joker! Expect lots of laughs.

THE ELLIS VERSE

Wanna know how 1999's biggest events pan out? Us too. So we contacted wacky Brit writer Warren Ellis (*Authority*) to put his own twisted spin on things.

WOLVERINE GETTING HIS ADAMANTIUM BACK...

"Bald Charlie Xavier wheels in and says, 'To me, my X-Men! Bring shovels!' They pin Wolverine down, cut a hole in his chest and bring the adamantium in big buckets."

DANGER GIRL STOPPING A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION FROM CONQUERING THE WORLD...

"However it's done, it'll involve breasts."

DAREDEVIL TAKING ON THE KINGPIN...

"Again? Well, by now, It's time for DD to call in backup. Specifically, the Norwegian whaling fleet."

THE FF IN A DEVASTATED PARIS...

"They look at the destruction. Look at each other. And suddenly raise their thumbs and laugh, 'Bonus!'"

FATHOM LEARNING THE TRUTH ABOUT HER WATER-BASED POWERS...

She is, indeed, the appalling, wet-perversion love child of [queen of those cheesy 1950s water movies] Esther Williams and Flipper. An ugly story. And one that I'd be happy to write, for enough money."

THE SAVAGE HULK TAKING ON THE AVENGERS...

"Three page story: Hulk smash. Hulk eat. Hulk use Captain America as a suppository. Writer go down to pub."

THE FINAL *PREACHER* SHOWDOWN BETWEEN JESSE CUSTER, THE SAINT OF KILLERS AND GOD...

"For no good reason, I have images of them all in black suits, with guns, in a warehouse, swearing at each other. Lawrence Tierney ('Reservoir Dogs') is there too, and no one questions why."

AN END TO THE MUTANT-KILLING LEGACY VIRUS...

"Turns out everyone caught it from Jean Grey, who stands revealed in her secret life as Madame JoJo, queen of the riding crop, rubber glove and goat. This leads to a special issue targeted at teenagers, called *It's Not So Bad Down at the VD Clinic*." ■

WOLVERINE

CREATIVE TEAM: Erik Larsen and Leinil Francis Yu

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Wolverine's been zipping around all over outer space. He hung out with the Starjammers, then went head to head with the likes of the Collector and yep, even Galactus.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: After returning to Earth and hangin' out with his buddies Cable and Nightcrawler, Logan hooks up with Jubilee in June. After that, look for Logan to spend some quality time with two of his oldest friends, Mac and Heather Hudson of Alpha Flight. Seeing as how there are still some weird goings-on with the Canadian folks in the aftermath of their recent series, Logan may find himself hip deep in international trouble.

DOWN THE ROAD: October marks the Canucklehead's 25th anniversary, so look for big doings that issue. It's a given that Wolverine's getting his adamantium back, and soon. The two most likely places that'll occur? The huge X-Men crossover event planned for this summer, or the Wolverine annual due out in October.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Word is Wolverine will definitely have his adamantium back for his anniversary issue. That month's guest-star? The first guy Logan ever went toe to toe with: the Incredible Hulk.

X-MEN BOOKS

CREATIVE TEAM: Alan Davis, Terry Kavanagh, Adam Kubert and Tim Townsend (*Uncanny X-Men*); Davis, Kavanagh and Mark Farmer (*X-Men*)

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: The massive S.H.I.E.L.D. Helicarrier has been hijacked, and it's up to the X-Men to save the day. Oh, yeah—Professor X is cracking under the strains of the last several months, not the least of which is the fact that archnemesis Magneto now rules the nation of Genosha.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Is it the breakup of the X-Men? Sure looks that way! The Professor is goin' buggy, Wolverine is pissed at everyone, and things get *so* bad that an emergency team of reserve X-Men has to be assembled. Look for the reservists to play a big part in the two core books, and this summer's three-issue *Astonishing X-Men* mini-series.

DOWN THE ROAD: He's big, he's bad, and he's got a giant "A" for a belt buckle! He's Apocalypse, the most evil of evil mutants, and he's got a new costume design and plans for total domination at the end of the millennium. Also, look for resolution, resolution, resolution! The mutant-killing Legacy Virus might just be cured, and Wolverine *will* get his adamantium back! No, really!

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Annuals will play a huge part this year! June's *X-Men 1999* ties in to the whole Helicarrier fiasco, *Gambit 1999* will resolve a parasitic infection that the Cajun has been dealing with, and *Uncanny X-Men 1999* is the *last* book of the year. Look for every little loose end to get tied up there.

California-based freelancer Scott Brick and Senior Staff Writer Jim McLauchlin believe that knowledge is power. The fools.

DOGS don't SURF.

People DO.

Matilda
[dog]

(DOGS also don't READ

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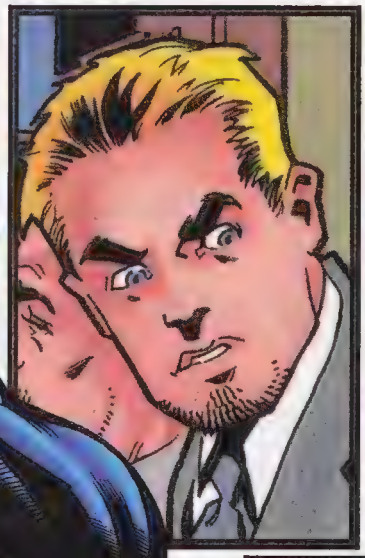
CASTING call

WIZARD casts the MUTANT X MOVIE!

This is not your beautiful home, and this is not your beautiful wife. In fact, this isn't even your universe. Thrown into the alternate universe of *Mutant X*, former X-Man Havok must adjust to an upside-down, dark reality where bad things happen to good people and good people do evil things. There's still an all-out battle between humans and mutants—but Havok doesn't know which humans and mutants he can trust. It's one bad-ass reality that's ripe for the Hollywood treatment.

The blockbuster potential is enormous: There's betrayal, intrigue, government conspiracies, and big ol' superhero battles. And the beautiful thing is, since *Mutant X* is outside of normal Marvel continuity, filmmakers could pretty much do whatever they wanted without ticking off comics fans or messing up X-characters on hold for another project.

So, what of it, Hollywood? Throw the script by way of Sam Raimi ("Army of Darkness"), give the directing reins to Alex Proyas ("The Crow," "Dark City") and let Trent Reznor ("Natural Born Killers") produce a hard-driving soundtrack, and "Mutant X" would raise havoc at the box office.



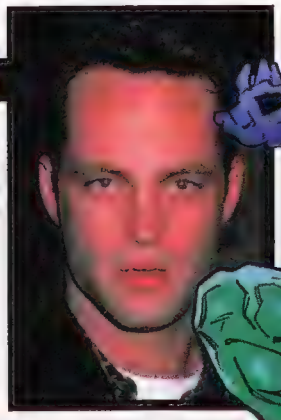
STEPHEN BALDWIN as HAVOK

Stephen Baldwin ("The Usual Suspects") knows what it's like to live in the shadow of a more-famous brother. And just like Havok stepping out from older brother Cyclops' shadow into a world of his own, Stephen could prove himself in the role of the relocated Alex Summers. As a special treat, Alec Baldwin could show up in a cameo flashback as Cyclops!

BY A BUNCH OF WIZARD STAFFERS

RUSSELL CROWE as THE FALLEN

Our pale-faced pretty boy turned evil minion strains at the slip of Madelyne's leash. Sit Russell Crowe ("L.A. Confidential") in the shade for about six months, slap some leather wings on him and you've got the Fallen. (And they say movie makeup is hard to do...sheesh.)



VINCE VAUGHN as ICE-MAN

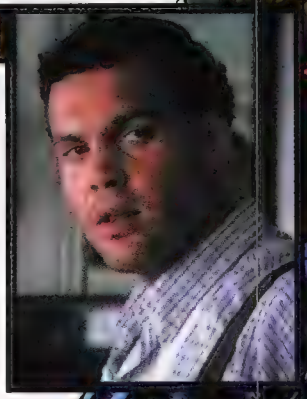
Could you keep a sense of humor if you destroyed everything you touched? Somehow Bob Drake laughs through his Midas-in-reverse curse. In his break-out hit "Swingers," Vaughn showed us a character that, for all his partying and carrying on, is just a lonely soul looking for companionship. We think he'd be just money as the "laughing on the outside" Ice-Man.

JADA PINKETT SMITH as BLOODSTORM

It's hard to look good with big-ass, bloody fangs in your gob. After seeing Jada Pinkett Smith drenched in blood in "Tales from the Crypt Presents: Demon Knight," is there any doubt Jada'd make you hot enough to risk your eternal soul just to be around her?

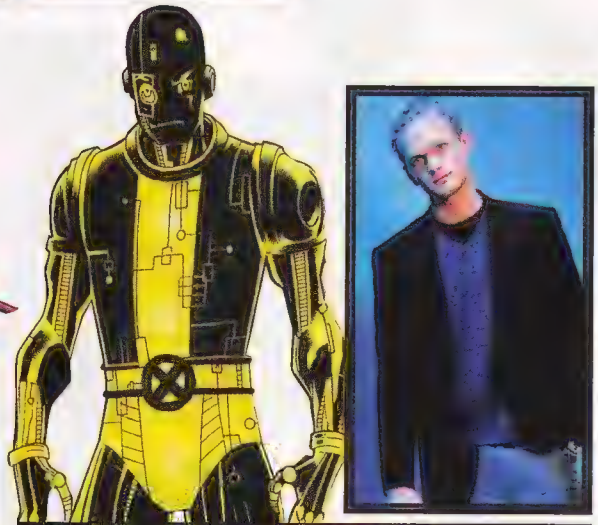
VINCENT D'ONOFRIO as THE BRUTE

A big guy like the Brute needs a big actor to fill his, ah, cloven hooves. Vincent D'Onofrio ("Men In Black") is a big guy in his own right, and has the charm and naked innocence to play the once-brilliant Brute.



ELIZA DUSHKU as ELEKTRA

Mrs. Doubtfire, she ain't. As nanny/protector of Havok's son young Scotty Summers, Elektra kicks serious tail. Eliza Dushku takes out vampires left and right as Faith the "evil" slayer on "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." It's not a stretch to imagine her taking out goblins with the same extreme prejudice.



NEIL PATRICK HARRIS as CEREBRO

On "Doogie Howser, M.D.," Neil Patrick Harris struggled with the fact that he was as smart as a computer. Were he to embrace it and go digital, he'd give birth to Cerebro, the mutant/computer/alien who runs the X-Mansion.

DEBRA MESSING as MADELYNE SUMMERS/ THE GOBLIN QUEEN

Sure, the Goblin Queen wants to enslave all of humanity and condemn us to a life of pain, but gosh darn it if she isn't as cute as a button! Filled to the brim with moxie, Debra Messing ("Will and Grace") is as feisty as she is beautiful, not unlike her royal look-alike, the Goblin Queen.

JOHN WESLEY SHIPP as REED RICHARDS

In this alternate world, not only is Reed Richards smooth as the devil himself, he's just as greedy and twice as evil. Problem is, he's got the world duped as president of the U.S. Speeding into the role is John Wesley Shipp ("Dawson's Creek"), who looks like an all-American boy without an evil bone in his body—but that's the point. It's all the more shocking when his nastiness reveals itself.

QUIET ON THE SET!

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Evil Zone

You're about to get a lesson in Pain 101. Lea is evil and it's your task to conquer her. Select one of nine characters and fight the others until the final battle. With amazing animated special maneuver sequences and state of the art graphics, you'll find Evil Zone to be the master of all fighting games. No butts about it.

titusgames.com

MUTANT MANIA

With an eye on a summer 2000 release, the 'X-Men' movie nears production

COUNTDOWN TO WIZARD 2000

The "X-Men" film hasn't even begun shooting, yet director Bryan Singer has already felt the weight of bringing Marvel's mutants to the big screen.

"[When] we start shooting in July, it'll be my three-year anniversary on the project," says Singer, who also directed "The Usual Suspects" and "Apt Pupil." "It's literally overwhelming, the amount of work, but the irony is by the time you're finished pre-production and you're ready to take a break, now it's time to start shooting."

Filming is slated to take place in Toronto, Canada as well as in undisclosed U.S. locations and will finish sometime in November with a targeted film release of summer 2000. Costume and set designs have already been decided upon, and special effects companies to create the mutant superpowers are currently being considered.

The script for the film—at least since Singer has been involved—has undergone more mutations than Jean Grey's powers. Ed Solomon ("Men in Black") was the first screenwriter to hand in a draft last year, followed by a rewrite from "Usual Suspects" writer Chris McQuarrie that was rumored to have had weaknesses. The latest rewrite is by Tom DeSanto, who also serves as one of the film's producers. While it's common practice for Hollywood productions to undergo rewrites, the various script incarnations have left fans wondering if there is a problem.

"I truly believe that the fans will be happy with our intent; we're not compromising their universe," Singer said of the process of translating the number one-selling comic into a two-hour movie. "I'm approaching it as though, what if this really happened to these people who are born like this and what that would mean for them. Again, my focus is on the characters and not just their powers. I hate to use the word 'realistic,' I suppose, but I'm looking at a more believable approach to [the X-Men]."

To achieve that realism, Singer has researched what it

DESIGNER GENES Nothing like tight spandex and eye beams to get your mojo movin'.

would be like to have real superpowers. Singer consulted with genetic researchers about the hard science of DNA and mutations and has spoken to self-proclaimed psychic and telekinetic, Uri Geller, best known for claiming to bend spoons with the power of his mind.

The current script focuses on six core X-Men: Professor X, Storm, Cyclops, Jean Grey, Rogue and Wolverine. Facing off against Xavier and his team will be Magneto and his Brotherhood of Mutants, whose roster is being kept a secret (though rumors abound that Sabretooth will be in the Brotherhood's ranks).

Helping to determine which X-Men will appear in the script is the film's budget. Singer places it somewhere between $75-$100 million, but conflicting reports indicate Fox is pushing to keep costs down and wants it done for $65 million. With an ensemble cast needed for the project and some stars earning eight figures per film, it's easy to see how the "X-Men" budget could spiral out of control.

Although Singer has previously stated he would like Patrick Stewart to play Xavier, he refused to comment on which actors he's considering but did reveal he was looking at actors auditioning in Los Angeles and from London by videotape.

"That's why I'm taking my time with casting," Singer explained. "I like to cast very interesting actors in the right role that fits their abilities."

Singer's deliberate pace has cranked up the rumor mill about casting. Russell Crowe ("L.A. Confidential") may have been a front-runner to play Wolverine at one point, but not anymore; in late March, a casting call went out for an actor in his "late 20s to mid 30s, 5' 5" to 6' in height" to audition for the role of Wolverine. Edward Norton ("American History X") and Vince Vaughn ("Psycho") have both been linked to Cyclops; Angela Bassett ("Contact") as Storm; and both Terence Stamp ("The Phantom Menace") and Ian McKellan ("Apt Pupil") have been mentioned for the role of Magneto. Keanu Reeves ("The Matrix") has publicly stated that he is a huge comics fan and talked with Singer, but had doubts he was right for any of the roles. Reports that Arnold Schwarzenegger or Will Smith were considered for parts have been officially denied by the production team.

Singer himself has gotten caught up in the casting speculation.

"I've read a little about it [on the Internet] and seen some of the casting buzz," Singer admitted. "I remember a kid came up to me at USC and asked me, 'Hey, what's going on with Arnold Schwarzenegger?' thinking he was in the movie. But I didn't know that, so I said 'I don't know! What? Is he sick or something?'"

As the first day of filming draws closer, Singer remains convinced that the key to making a successful two-hour "X-Men" movie lies with incorporating the essence of the comic characters into the film and not relying exclusively upon special effects.

"I look at the animated series and the comic books and they're wonderful," Singer said. "I'm not saying we're making Woody Allen's 'X-Men,' it's an action-adventure picture, but at the same time, there're lots about the characters. There's a lot about the comic and the stories of the characters that I think the audience will really respond to."

■ PATRICK SAURIOL

X-TRAS

LET THE MUTANT HUNT BEGIN

Casting for next summer's live-action "X-Men" film has barely begun. But you don't need Cerebro to figure out that rumors are already out of control. Who's playing everyone's favorite muties according to word on the street? Here's the latest from the rumor mill:

RUSSELL CROWE AS WOLVERINE

The scrappy punk from "L.A. Confidential" was the big front-runner for the X-Men's shortest (and toughest) member...until recent reports put Wolverine in his late 20s, at 5' 5".

VINCE VAUGHN AS CYCLOPS

The star of the recent "Psycho" remake is leading the pack for the role of X-Men leader Cyclops. As Norman Bates, he proved he'd be a great strong, silent type.

ANGELA BASSETT AS STORM

"How Stella Got Her Groove" star Angela Bassett's brewing up support as the X-Men's storm-controlling goddess. She recently denied being part of the flick.

PATRICK STEWART AS PROFESSOR X

Director Bryan Singer has previously stated he'd love to get the "Star Trek: The Next Generation" star to fill the role of the X-Men's mentor.

TERENCE STAMP AS MAGNETO

Fresh from "Star Wars: Episode I–The Phantom Menace," Terence Stamp has been mentioned in conjunction with the X-Men's greatest foe: Magneto.

KEANU REEVES AS ANYONE

The Monotone Man, who broke box-office records with "The Matrix," has stated he's a major comic book fan and has already talked with Singer about his interest in the "X-Men" film. ■ C. BAIN

TERENCE STAMP PHOTO © CORI WELLS BROWN/OUTLINE. ALL OTHER PHOTOS COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION

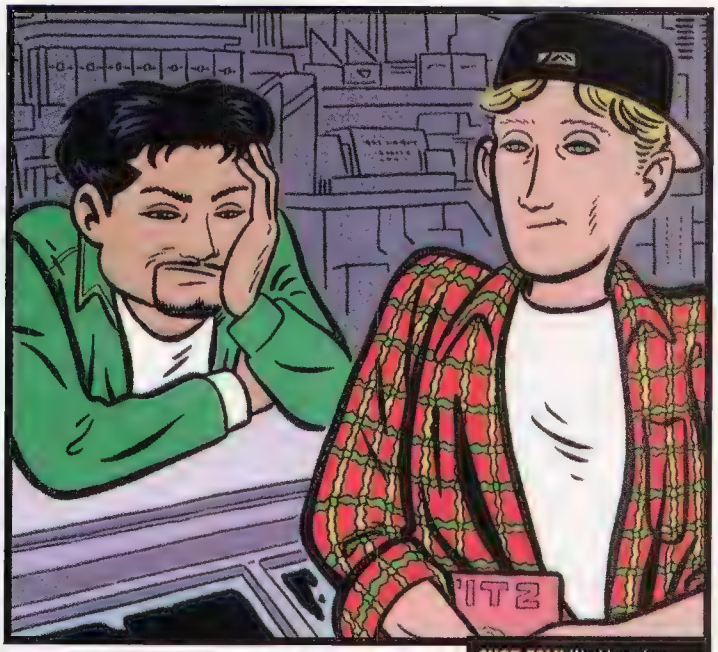
'CLERKS' REGISTER MAJOR SALE

Smith's debut cartoon cracks ABC's January prime-time lineup

Looks like that minimum-wage job paid off. "Clerks," writer/director Kevin Smith's 1994 film based on his seven years experience as a convenience store register jockey, quickly became a cult classic and put Smith on the movie map. Now, "Clerks" is ringing up again, as a new prime-time animated series on ABC scheduled as a mid-season replacement in January 2000.

"It's initially six episodes," Smith said. "If ABC digs it, they'll be back for a full season of 22." No day or time slot has been specified yet, but as far as Smith is concerned, the series is already a hit.

"It's phenomenal," said Smith, who was married to journalist Jennifer Schwalbach in a small ceremony at George Lucas' Skywalker Ranch in April. At presstime, the couple was expecting its first child. "On the business side, everyone is, 'Oh, if we get enough episodes to make syndication, we'll make millions!' Me? No matter what happens—even if it tanks—I say we made it already. It's every boy's dream, ain't it? A cartoon of their own."



SHOP TALK Would you buy anything from these slackers?

Smith promises that the half-hour series will be familiar to fans of the "Clerks" movie and *Clerks* comics from Oni Press. "It's pretty much the same as what you've seen—Dante and Randall doing crazy stuff and having crazy stuff happen to them," he said. "Clerks" actors—Brian O'Halloran (Dante) and Jeff Anderson (Randall)—will provide voices for their characters. Jason Mewes (Jay) and Smith himself (as Silent Bob) will also do occasional voices. Smith is also lining up practically the entire cast of his upcoming movie, "Dogma," (see sidebar) for appearances. "Ben Affleck's gonna come on and do a voice," Smith said. "I've talked to Chris Rock, and he's thinking about it. Alanis [Morissette] said she'll do one. I want to do it 'Simpsons'-style, with guest voices all the time."

As for art, everything is based on underground artist Jim Mahfood's (two *Clerks* one-shot comics) designs. "After that, it's going through the Disney animation unit," says Smith, "the same guys who do 'Gargoyles' and 'Duck Tales.' I love that stuff. They're top-flight. So everything should look great."

On the writing end, Smith is making sure things remain true to their roots by scripting the series himself, with a little help from some friends. Scott Mosier, producer of the Smith-written and -directed "Mallrats" and "Chasing Amy," will be a "Clerks" co-writer. So will "Seinfeld" veteran Dave Mandel, who wrote the "Bizarro Jerry" episode of "Seinfeld."

And despite his checkered past, Smith isn't worried about producing something that'll fly past network censors. The original "Clerks" contained bucketloads of "frank sexual discussion" and was dripping with those "Seven Words You Can't Say on Television." But Smith chose to play ball with a PG-style series on ABC. "We had met with HBO," Smith relayed. "They were interested. We could have done a balls-to-the-wall version with all the language and everything. But to me, a cartoon makes it different. I don't mind any restrictions on the language. It'll force me to be more creative, and I guess I'll actually see if I can still be funny without being crass. It'll be something of a challenge." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

KEVIN SMITH PHOTO BY PAUL SCIRBALO

KEVIN SMITH WATCH

DOGMA STYLE

DISNEY DITCHES 'DOGMA'

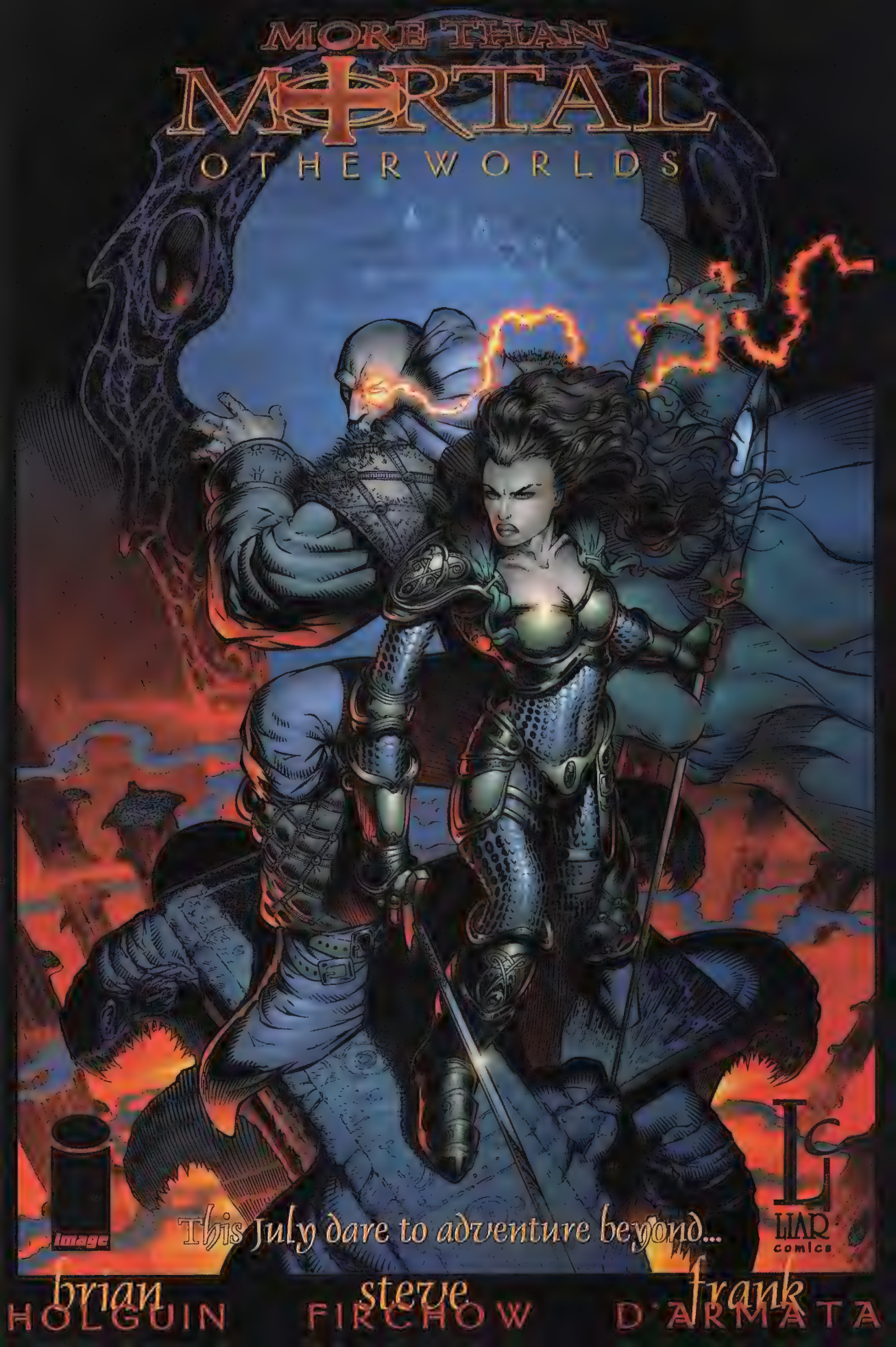
Things that'll always start an argument: Politics and religion. In this case, religion.

"Dogma," the Kevin Smith-written and -directed October release that Smith describes as a "mystical road trip," has proven too much of a hot potato for Disney to handle.

KEVIN AND HELL Disney's God Squad dumps Smith's "Dogma"

Smith's fourth film, which stars Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Salma Hayek, Chris Rock and George Carlin, was scheduled for release by Disney-owned Miramax. But Disney, always trying to project a wholesome image, got cold feet over the movie's religious content. "Dogma" includes a Catholic Church recruitment drive, angels walking the Earth and singer Alanis Morissette as the voice of God. So Miramax co-chairmen Harvey and Bob Weinstein have personally shelled out more than $10 million for all rights to the movie, which they intend to release through a different distributor. Smith sees the move as a minor one. "The shift is a good thing for all involved," he said. "It won't affect the amount of screens we play on in the least." ■ **JM**

MORE THAN MORTAL
OTHERWORLDS



brian HOLGUIN
steve FIRCHOW
frank D'ARMATA

MEMBERS ONLY

'Avengers' animated roster revealed

The Avengers have finally assembled. Officially, that is. Ever since Fox announced an animated "Avengers" series scheduled for this fall, fans have wondered which of Earth's Mightiest Heroes would make the cut. Now the roster is official.

The series begins with the team consisting of the shrinkable couple, team leader Dr. Hank Pym (Ant-Man) and his wife Wasp, the catlike Tigra, the probability-altering Scarlet Witch and team powerhouse Wonder Man. But just like its constantly changing comic counterpart, expect membership changes.

"Wonder Man starts out in the first episode but is laid low in a coma," said Ron Myrick, creative director for "Avengers." With Wonder Man incapacitated and near death, the team looks for replacements to bolster its lineup. Their quest results in the addition of archer extraordinaire Hawkeye, the high-flyin' Falcon and the android-like Vision. "But [Wonder Man] will be brought back coinciding with his evolution in the comic books where he becomes pure energy," Myrick added.

Working with series head writers Eric and Julia Leward, Myrick envisions these Avengers as an established team that has a previous history. "In subsequent episodes, we'll get bits and pieces of how the other members became an Avenger," Myrick explained. He also revealed that there will be opportunities for surprise cameos from the comic's founding members like Thor and Captain America.

"There is a story where Captain America comes back," Myrick said. "This threatens Ant-Man's role of leadership, at least in his mind. I can imagine in that script we'll also get a bit of how the Avengers were formed." But since Hulk and Iron Man have previously had their own animated series, Myrick and his team of writers are planning to give the less visible characters their chance in the spotlight.

Fox has asked for an additional five episodes to increase the number of shows for the first season to 18. And Myrick couldn't be happier. "That gives us more room for exploration and development of the characters, which is exciting." ■ PS

NO STRINGS ATTACHED Hawkeye's so good he doesn't even use bowstrings!

VIDPICK

IF YOU LIKE COMICS, CHECK THIS OUT

TRUE ROMANCE

(1993, Unrated Director's Cut)

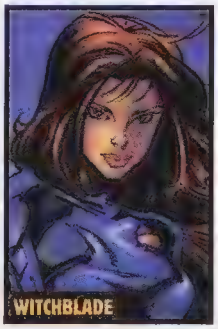
KEY PLAYERS: Christian Slater, Patricia Arquette, Val Kilmer, Dennis Hopper, Brad Pitt, Christopher Walken, Samuel L. Jackson

THE DOPE: Geez. Who's not in this film? With more guest cameos than gunshots, this Quentin Tarantino-written flick features the usual excessive cussin', violence and all-around nastiness. When a highly unlikely pair o' lovers embark on a whirlwind romance, they soon find themselves in possession of a suitcase filled with mob contraband. (That's drugs, kiddies...) And that's when the fun begins. Toss in the spirit of Elvis, pie eating, a "T.J. Hooker" audition and Bronson Pinchot puking after a rollercoaster ride, and consider us hooked!

COMIC CONNECTION: Simple-minded Clarence (Slater) works at a comic shop called Heroes for Sale. He takes Alabama (Arquette) there on their first date and talks about Spider-Man #1 and comics in general.

THE WITCHING HOUR

Despite bubbling rumors, TNT's 'Witchblade' casts on



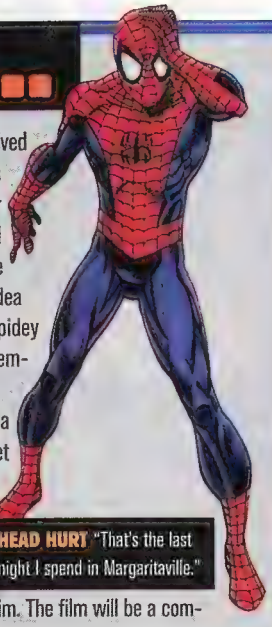
WITCHBLADE

Don't believe the hype. Contrary to recent reports, TNT has *not* put off its "Witchblade" series until the year 2000. Although the series has suffered a number of setbacks (including ditching the first script of the pilot episode), Top Cow insists the show is still moving ahead on schedule with filming slated to begin shortly.

"It's as news to us as it is to anybody," said Top Cow President Brad Foxhoven of the delayed rumors. "From what we understand, there is no delay and I think it might have been a slip-of-the-mouth by TNT."

The live-action series will film in Toronto this summer and, although a lead actress has yet to be cast, a number of potential suitors for the role of Witchblade-wearing Sara Pezzini have been narrowed down. Talk of the current delay began when rumors spread that the latest script, written by J.D. Zeik ("Ronin"), was being retooled. But according to Foxhoven, there's no cause for alarm. "We're still moving forward very quickly, the script is coming along terrific and we're looking at scene locations and set locations for the show." ■ PS

TRAILERS...



HEAD HURT "That's the last night I spend in Margaritaville."

'SPIDER' WRITER: Early in March, the parties involved with the dispute over "Spider-Man" movie rights (Marvel, MGM and Sony) settled, leaving the way for Sony Pictures to make the movie. Now Sony's hired screenwriter David Koepp ("Jurassic Park") to write the movie based on the James Cameron "scriptment" idea from a few years ago. Cameron's take was to have Spidey go up against a pair of supervillains whose powers resembled Electro and the Sandman.

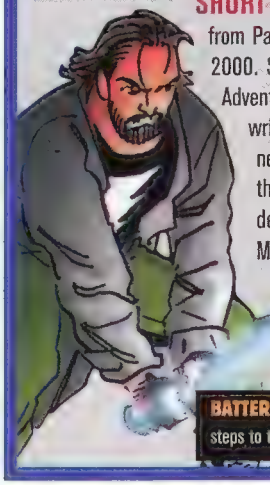
CASTING MONKEYS: The movie based on Kaja Blackley's Dark Town comic book has just hired Bridget Fonda ("A Simple Plan"), Chris Kattan ("Saturday Night Live") and Whoopi Goldberg to join Brendan Fraser. "Monkey Bone" tells the story of a cartoonist (Fraser) who falls into a coma and the bizarre world of Dark Town where Death (Goldberg) waits for him. The film will be a combination of live-action and stop-motion animation, directed by Henry Selick ("The Nightmare Before Christmas") and written by Sam Hamm (screenwriter of "Batman" and the latest "Fantastic Four" draft).

'MATRIX' MANIA: The success of "The Matrix"—it earned the highest single weekend box-office gross ever for the month of April—has led to plans for it to be the first in a trilogy of "Matrix" films by Andy and Larry Wachowski. Because of the brothers' success, two scripts they wrote prior to "Matrix"—a feature film based on Alan Moore's "V For Vendetta" series and a proposed "Plastic Man" movie—are getting renewed interest from Warner Bros. There's also been talk that the brothers are being offered WB's ailing "Superman," "Batman" or possibly even Columbia Pictures' "Spider-Man" movie, but right now the Warchowskis are happy to take a break. "They're being offered the moon," admitted one source.

'HARSH REALM' BEGINS: Shooting on the $6-million pilot for "X-Files" creator Chris Carter's new series, "Harsh Realm," has been completed in Vancouver. Loosely based on James Hudnall's comic book mini-series about a detective that can enter virtual worlds, Carter has chosen to expand the number of characters and make them members of the military, but they still enter virtual worlds. Fox will make a decision this summer if it'll pick up the pilot as a regular series this fall.

'HARSH' REALITY Carter's virtual copland.

SHORT TAKES: Variety is reporting that a "Tomb Raider" movie from Paramount Pictures could be in theaters as soon as summer 2000. Stephen Herek ("Holy Man," "Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure") is close to signing on to direct...Kevin Smith will be writing the screenplay for the "Mage" film based on Matt Wagner's comic...Now that "Star Wars" mania is back in full force, there are plans to make a sequel to "Troops," the independently-produced "Star Wars"/"Cops" spoof...The "Mystery Men", a film about a team of seven bumbling, would-be superheroes starring Ben Stiller, William Macy and Paul Reubens, is scheduled to open Aug. 6..."The Crow" syndicated live-action series has been picked up for a second season... A special edition of "Aliens" is being released on DVD for the first time in June, featuring 17 minutes of never-before-seen deleted footage. ■ PS



BATTER UP Mage steps to the plate.

BASIC TRAINING

SEAN CHEN SHOWS YOU

HOW TO DRAW VEHICLES

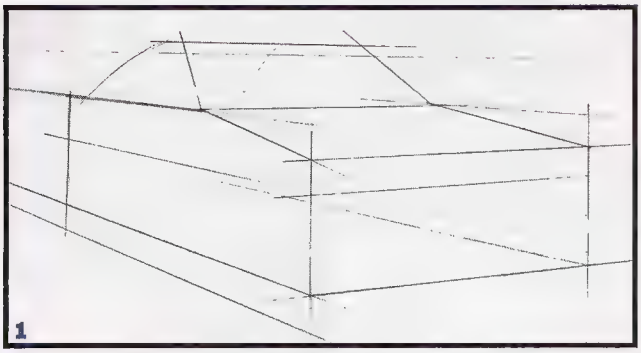
You may think it's unfair that some superheroes can fly while others can't. But don't feel bad, because the flightless ones have something their soaring counterparts don't: cool rides! Just *how* cool depends on your ability to design and draw them.

In college, I majored in industrial design; this instilled in me a love for the design and rendering of man-made objects. So, I'm here to teach you all about drawing vehicles. Whether it's the Avengers Quinjet or just the necessary props of an average street scene, vehicles are everywhere. So, grab your learner's permit and buckle up. You're well on your way to getting your artistic license.

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR

CAR CARE

Let's start with a basic car—drawing one can be broken down into four easy steps. **First**, I box in the general shape to determine the size, proportion and view. All we're trying to do at this stage is rough out the shape and provide guidelines for the later stages. It's always a good idea to evaluate what you have at each step to make sure it's in line with your original vision before proceeding.



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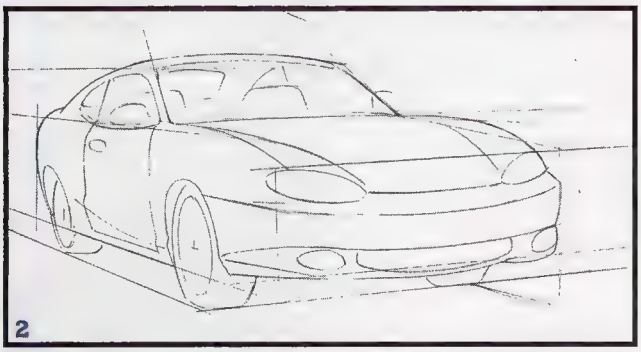
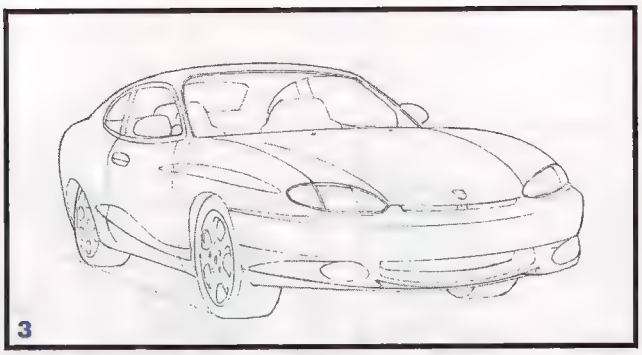


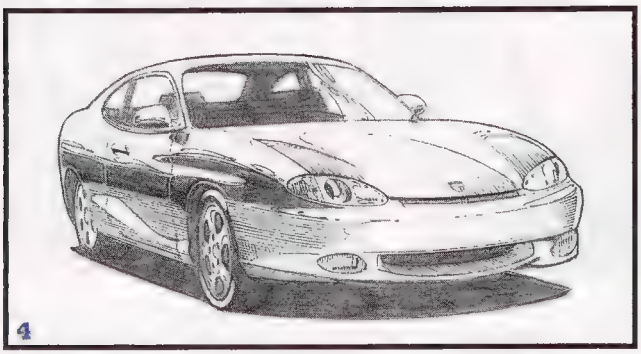
2

Second, I draw the major shapes of the car, referring carefully to the perspective guidelines to assure structure and symmetry. Most cars—especially the sporty variety—are made entirely of curves, but you need to be aware of the straight perspective lines that those curves came from in order to draw them convincingly.



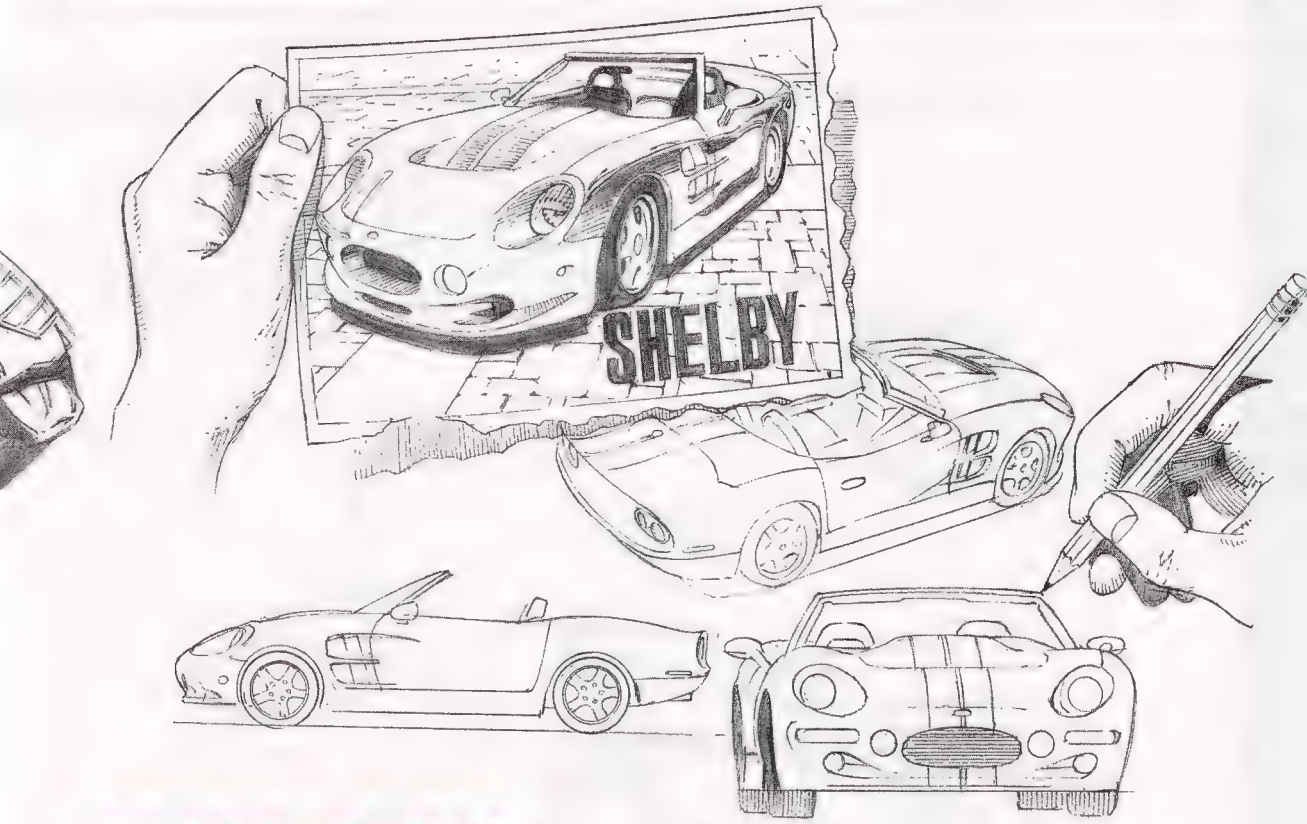
3

Third, I continue to add more of the lines that embellish the car and all of its parts and shapes. Always work from the general to the specific; that is, make sure that the general form of the headlight is in the right place and of the right size and shape *before* adding any detail, like shapes within or glass texture. At this stage we have a finished line drawing.



4

Fourth, I add the rendering. This adds weight and solidity to the drawing and provides realism. On any given car, we are rendering painted metal, shiny chrome, transparent glass, etc. Observe how these materials appear in real life, and stylize them to convey the unique properties of each. Don't forget the cast shadow on the ground! And since the windows are transparent, you can usually see a silhouette of the interior through the other windows. Notice how the partial glare on the right suggests the presence of a windshield by obscuring the interior silhouette. Ah, can't you practically smell that new car smell?

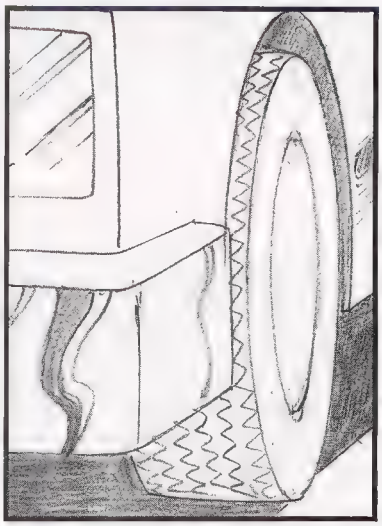


PICTURE PERFECT

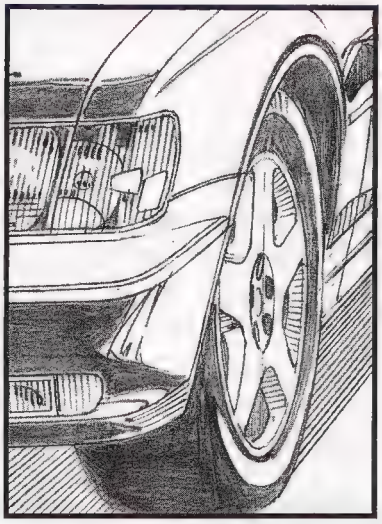
Because cars are such complex machines, I like to use reference material, especially if the car is featured fairly prominently. Most of the time, the angle of the car you're drawing won't match the shot of the car in your photo, so you'll have to improvise. A very useful skill to develop is the ability to rotate the car in your mind and extrapolate any view you need. It's not as hard as you think; nearly all the information you need is provided in a good three-fourths view. The only side we *don't* see is the back. Remember, the car is symmetrical, and fits within a basic perspective box. Just make sure that the car maintains the same proportions and doesn't become too long or too compact as the viewing angle changes.

GET THE REFERENCE?

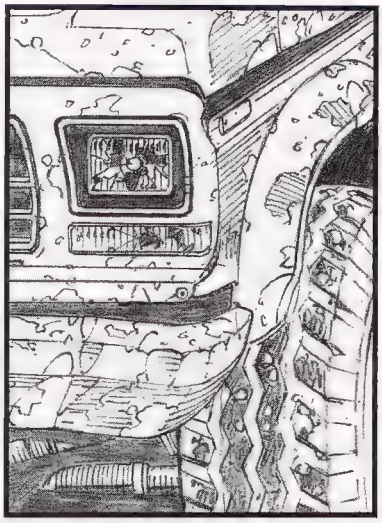
I can't stress enough how important reference is—whether you use photographs, magazines, TV commercials or even your own car sitting in the driveway.



This drawing suffers from a lack of observed information. We all can picture a car in our minds, but when it comes down to drawing one, we can't recall many specifics. This usually results in an amateurish drawing.



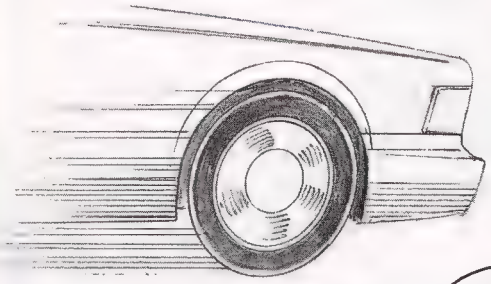
Now that's more like it. This drawing wasn't traced or copied, but reference was used to understand the specifics of the forms and inform the rendering, which says to us, "This is a shiny new car."

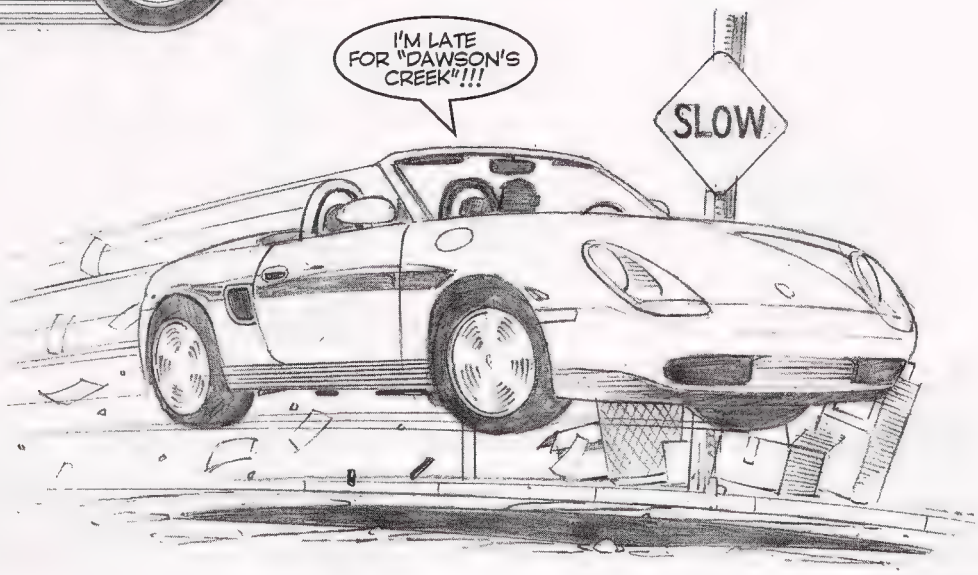


This is not. To get this effect, be observant. What makes a car look run down? Employing a different rendering technique adds realism of a different variety. Remember, don't draw every car with a showroom shine.

SPEED RACER

You may have noticed a phenomenon about cars in comics: They can all fly! This rarely happens in real life, but in comics there's no such thing as tire wear, because, unless parked, the tires never touch the ground! The rule here is: Always draw your car as if it's involved in a high-speed chase in San Francisco.



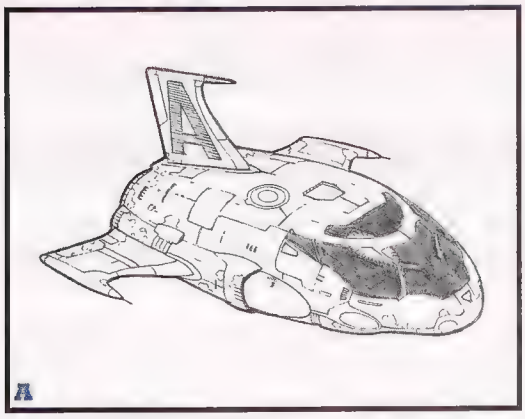


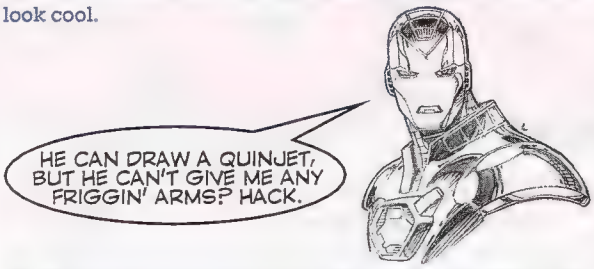
Disclaimer: Professional driver on a closed track. Do NOT try this at home.

MAKING IT COOL

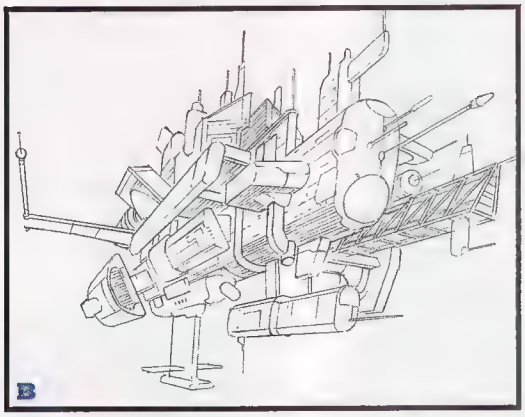
Even more fun than drawing an existing vehicle is coming up with your own unique design. Vehicles are getting sleeker as hard lines give way to sexy curves, but this isn't a hard and fast rule. Some very cool vehicles—stealth fighters, Humvees and Lamborghinis—are more planar in nature. Expose yourself to as many sources of cool vehicle designs as possible: military crafts, sports cars, anime, sci-fi movies, and so on.

A word or two about design: I've drawn three distinctly different ships here to show you what their design conveys. Your primary concern when designing a vehicle is to know what the shapes and details you choose to employ say about the vehicle's purpose. After that, you can work on making it look cool.

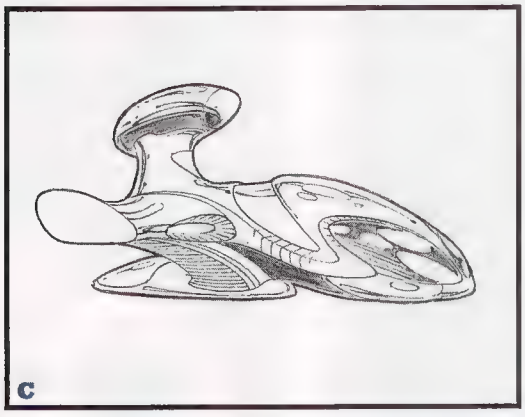




A. What information are we getting from this Avengers Quinjet? We know that it is near-future technology because of the recognizable parts derived from current aircraft, such as the wings, windshield, air intakes, gun ports, etc. We get an indication of its size (about as big as a bus) because of the overall simplistic shape and scale of its recognizable parts. Notice the wear and tear on its surface. This says that this ship is "real" and has been in use for a while.



B. What information can we derive from the design and drawing of this ship? Notice the upward viewing angle and the extreme perspective. That, along with the complexity and rectilinear forms, tells us this thing is huge (about the size of a skyscraper or bigger). The design also indicates far-future, man-made technology.



C. The bizarre, organic forms of this vehicle, along with the total lack of recognizable, man-made technology, tells us that this ship is completely alien in nature. It also has an otherworldly sheen to it. Even with its bizarre, alien design, it's still possible to give some indication of its size. The proportions of its parts tell us that it's probably between the sizes of the two previous ships.

Well, that's a general look at a fairly complex lesson. If your results leave a lot to be desired, have patience. The key here is practice, and tons of it. Which, if you're like me, you won't mind doing one bit. The best way to become good at drawing vehicles is to love drawing them. Once you master the art of transportation design and drawing, your heroes will be cruisin' in style, whether on land, sea, air or even space.

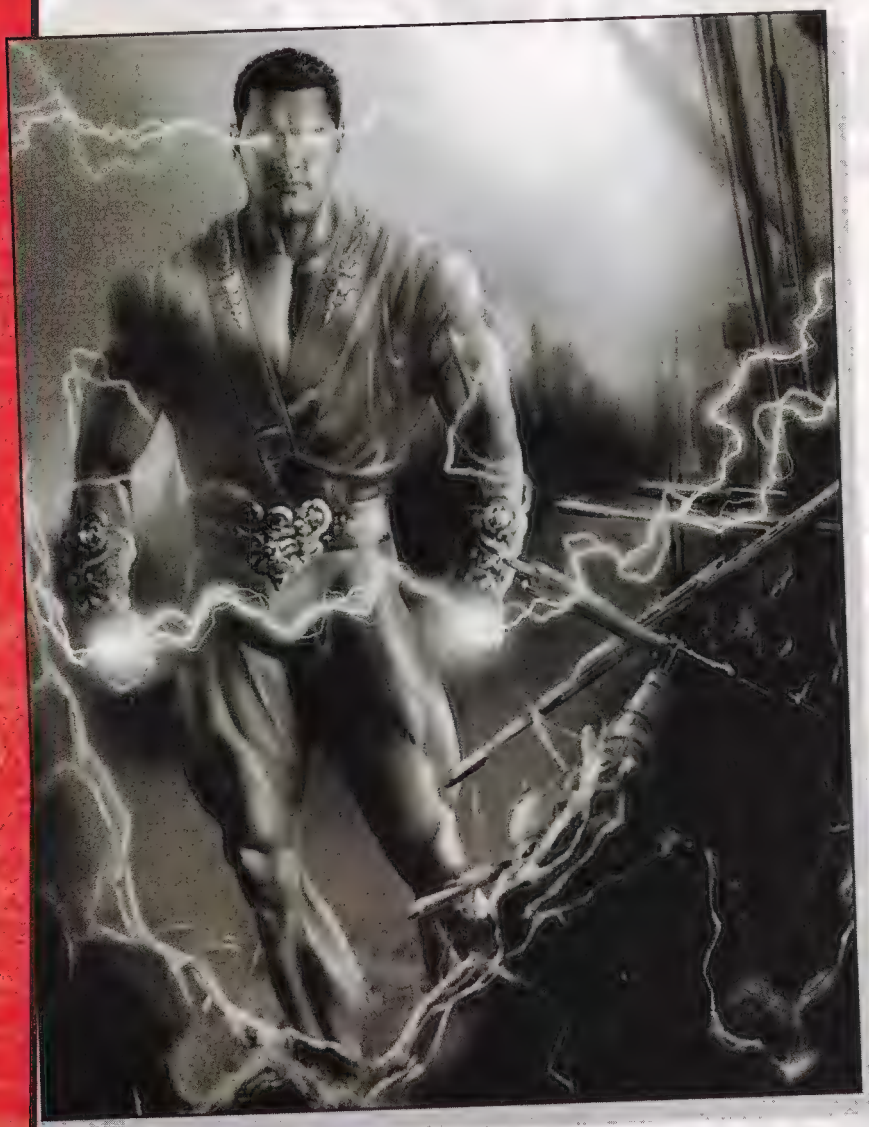
Sean Chen just can't drive 55. To see more of his killer-looking vehicles, just check out the monthly pages of Marvel's Iron Man. *And to take a peek at Sean's personal sketchbook, grab a computer and head to www.wizardschool.com.*

Drawing BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the showcase for WIZARD READERS' ART

Let's face it: All this superhero stuff is about fulfilling power fantasies. So we at *Wizard* decided to go all out! In our "I'm an *Earth X* Superhero!" contest from *Wizard* #91, we asked you to imagine you found yourself in Alex Ross' *Earth X* universe, where *everybody* has superpowers. What would you look like? Being the booty-callin' readers that you are, you wasted no time, and soon our mailboxes were full to overflowing, except for that little spot reserved for *Danger Girl* #5 (Oh God please!!!).

Our grand-prize winner flies away with original artwork, original scripts, an Earth X T-shirt and some signed issues! Second-prize winners and honorable mentions get some goodies too. Looking at all your art really gave us a power trip, so keep the tangy creative stuff flowin'.



GRAND-PRIZE WINNER

THIS ONE CAUGHT OUR EYE

ARMAGEDDON
MARIO RUIZ
Jackson Heights, NY

THE BOOTY

THE ADJUDICATOR
ROB MacKINNON, Vancouver, B.C., Canada

THE MARVEL
KEITH JAMES JOHNSON, Chanhassen, MN

HALFLING
FRANKIE FRANCO, Ontario, CA

Want your art to appear on one of these two pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your "Drawing Board" entries to:

SUBMIT!

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. **You must also include a color photo of yourself.** All entries are non-returnable and become the property of Wizard Entertainment. Employees of Wizard Entertainment are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? All right, good luck!

BEHOLD THE LORD OF DARKNESS!

WIZARD #½ OFFER

One of the biggest stars of the WWF is available one time and one time only in this exclusive comic from *Wizard* and Chaos! Comics. Don't miss out on all the bone-crushing action as the Undertaker takes on wrestlers and demons while battling for control of Stygian, Hell's prison. Join the Undertaker's minions by simply filling out the order form, enclosing three U.S. dollars and mailing it in. You don't want to anger the Lord of Darkness!

- **Exclusive story starring the WWF superstar!**
- **Ultra-limited!**

Wait too long, and the Ministry of Darkness will come ringing your doorbell! So don't delay!

FILL OUT THE COUPON! NOW!

LAW BEARER

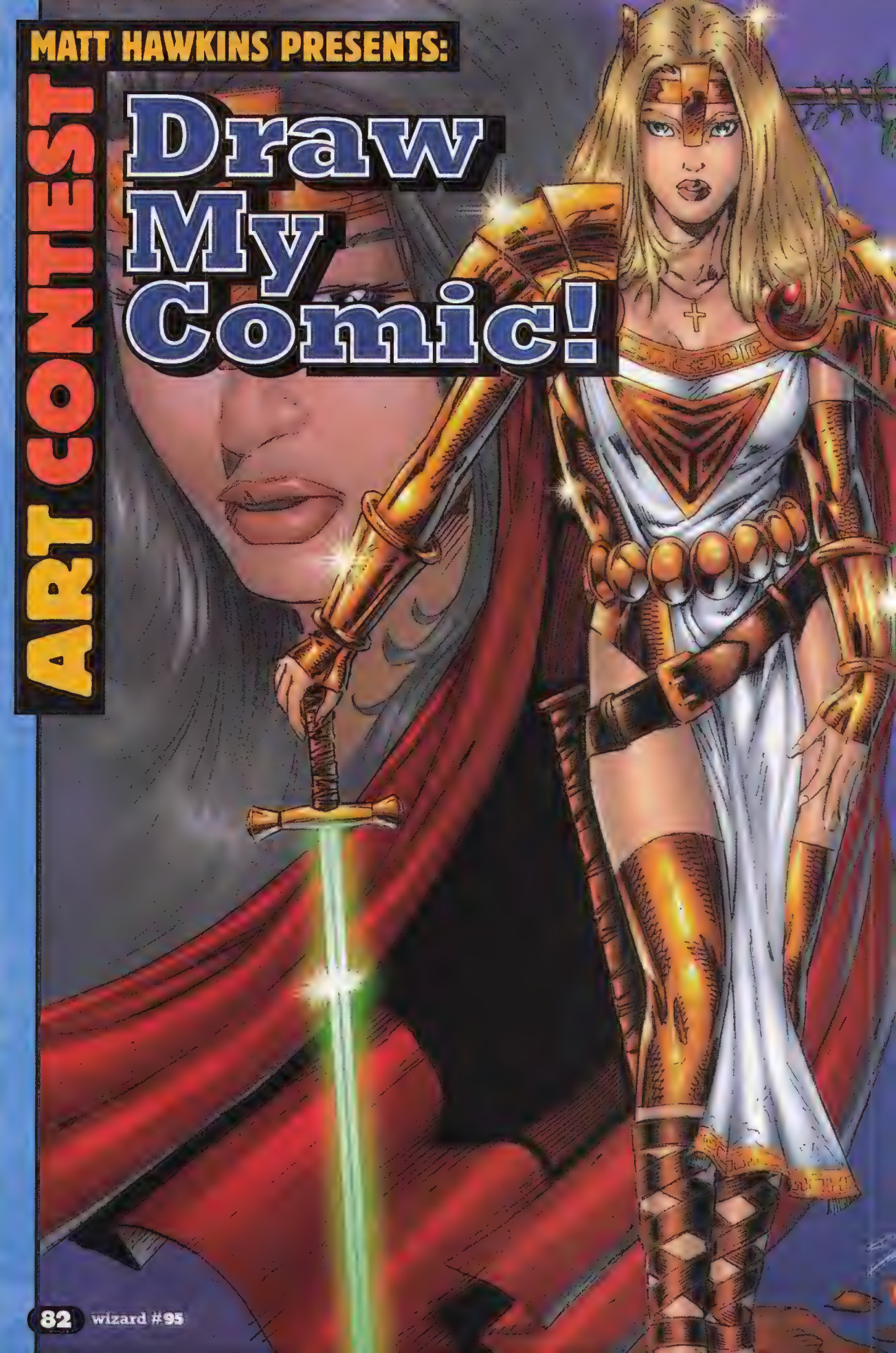
No reproductions of this coupon will be accepted. This coupon must be sent in the accompanying envelope. With this coupon, you can order two comics. You may put additional coupons in the same envelope. Remit by check or money order only. Canadian orders remit $4.00 per copy, other foreign orders remit $6.00 per copy. All payments must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. Make all checks payable to Wizard Entertainment. Offer good only while supply lasts. Please allow eight to 12 weeks from date of expiration for delivery. Changes of address will not be forwarded unless Wizard Entertainment is notified in writing by August 20, 1999.

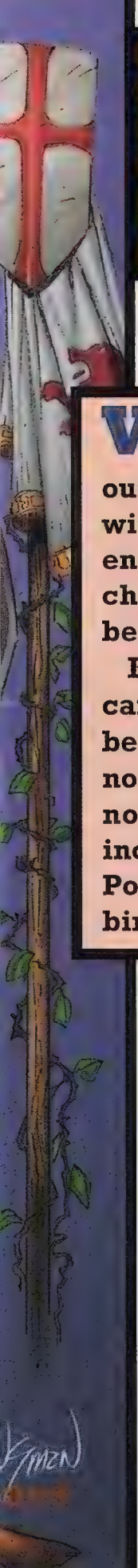
THIS OFFER EXPIRES AUGUST 20, 1999

MATT HAWKINS PRESENTS:

Draw My Comic!

ART CONTEST





PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One Vincent van Gogh wins the opportunity to draw an eight-page story that will be published in a future issue of *Lady Pendragon*. This person will be compensated $100 per page, plus he'll win copies of *Lady Pendragon* #1-#3 and #0 including all variants, signed by creators Matt Hawkins and John Stinsman. Plus, he'll win all three versions of the Lady Pendragon action figure.

FIRST PRIZE (4): Four Claude Monets each win copies of *Lady Pendragon* #1- #3 and #0 including all variants, signed by creators Matt Hawkins and John Stinsman. Plus, they'll win all three versions of the Lady Pendragon action figure.

Want a shot at stardom? Here's what you have to do: Draw your best version of Lady Pendragon. That's it. Use every ounce of creativity you have, because this is the big one. The winner will become a published comic artist. Need reference? Go buy the comic. We'll pore through the entries and choose the best and most creative as the winners. Hurry before we're forced to get medieval on your ass!

Keep these things in mind as you start drawing: Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, marker, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" X 11 1/4". Do not fold, bend, or roll artwork. Mail flat. Also be sure to include two photos of yourself with the entry. Each photo (no Polaroids, please) should include your full name, date of birth, telephone number and address on the back.

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY MATT HAWKINS, AND HE DARES YOU TO CHALLENGE HIM AT "JEOPARDY!"

MEDIEVAL LAW

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Matt Hawkins, their immediate families and serious history buffs. Sure, some of the stuff in this comic is made up–so what?! Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Draw My Comic!" Art Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filing it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries and all rights thereto become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by July 30, 1999.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, mutilated entries or entries sliced with a long sword. Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than September 3, 1999. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, he will be forced to stand before the Knights of the Round Table and do the Hully-Gully, and another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about August 13, 1999.

For a list of winners, available after August 13, 1999, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Draw My Comic!" Art Contest Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach your entry and photos and put it all in an envelope. Send it to:

"Draw My Comic!" Art Contest
c/o Wizard Entertainment
P.O. Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

"Draw My Comic!" Art Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE JULY 30, 1999!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

E-mail address _____

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY AND PHOTOS?

DANGER-OUS TOYS

Fan boys the world over will have one more reason to drool this summer. McFarlane Toys will release four action figures based on J. Scott Campbell's fan-fave *Danger Girl* series this July, in a line of toys sold only to comic book stores through Diamond Comic Distributors. Look for sexy femmes **Abbey Chase**, **Sydney Savage** and **Natalia Kassle** to slink onto stores shelves along with big bad dude **Major Maxim**. These figures are all sculpted in Campbell's unique style and are sure to be hot items with fans of his comic. Similar to McFarlane's recent Marv from Sin City and Dawn action figures, the Danger Girl toys will come complete with detailed diorama bases and loads of accessories, from guns to whips. Mmm...

BLOCKS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI; ALL OTHER PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI EXCEPT FOR: ALLEY CAT COURTESY OF ACTION TOYS, AND QUANE II COURTESY OF RESSURUS.

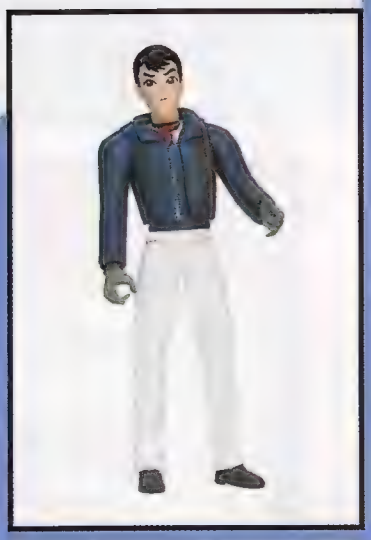
BY TOM PALMER JR.

Semi-naked babes...masked monkeys...and an Alex Ross toy!

GO SPEED RACER!

Vroom-vroom! ReSaurus is building on the success of its first line of **Speed Racer** action figures, released late last year, with another assortment based on the classic animated series. Speed himself returns as Grand Prix Speed, complete with racing jacket and helmet, along with the mysterious **Racer X**, Inspector Detector and the Assassin.

This second round of Speed Racer toys will hit stores in June. And also on the way this July is Speed's stylin' ride, the Mach 5, which comes complete with Spridle and (Monkey alert! Monkey alert!) Chim Chim stowed away in the trunk.

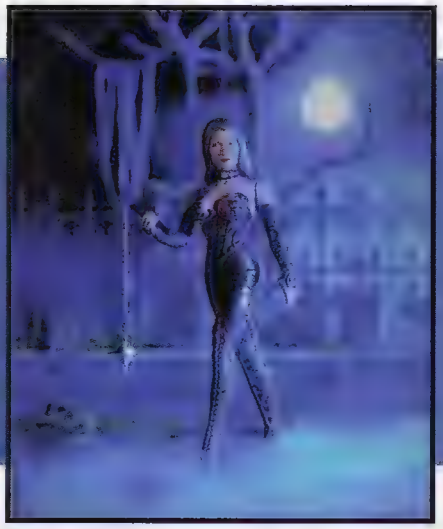


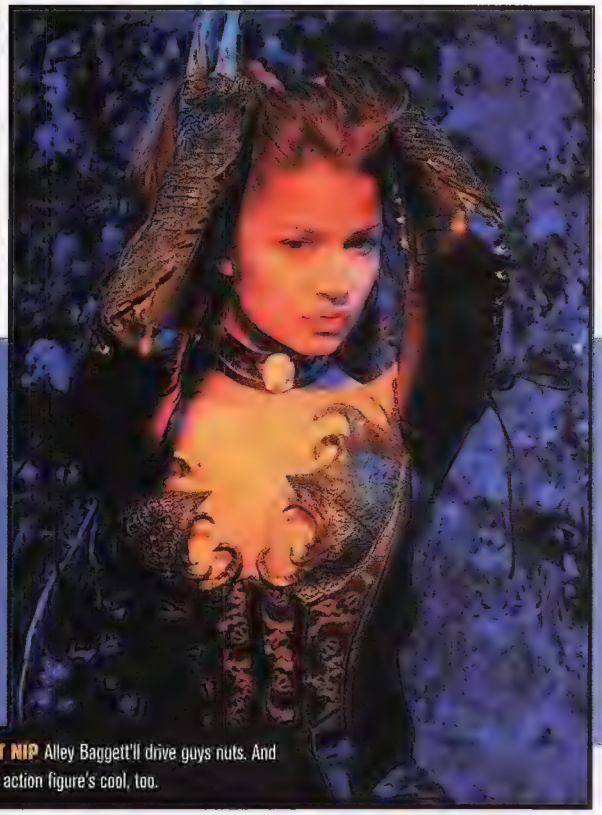
DANGEROUS CURVES Opposite: McFarlane Toys' Danger Girl line includes (clockwise from top) Major Maxim, Natalia Kassle and Sydney Savage. This page: DG's Abbey Chase, and ReSaurus' Speed Racer line with (clockwise from top) Racer X, Assassin, Chim Chim, Spridle and Speed Racer.

STAR WARS PHOTOS COURTESY OF KENNER

GOTTA BAG IT

Meow! *Playboy* "Lingerie Model of the Year" Alley Baggett has made the jump into comic books (Woo-hoo!) and now she's slinking her way into the toy world. Action Toys will release an action figure based on her *Alley Cat* comic book character later this year, complete with a costume that's sure to keep her warm in winter months.





CAT NIP Alley Baggett'll drive guys nuts. And her action figure's cool, too.

GUNG-HO MUNHGO

Sunhgo the Basilisk might not be a household name yet, but he's one bad-ass lizard. Toy fans should be on the lookout for his action figure from Rendition Figures. Heading up the new Quantum Mechanics line, Munhgo is based on an upcoming comic series from Avatar Press. This lizard stands eight inches tall, with 11 points of articulation and will also be available in a Stealth Armor variant. Go lizard huntin' this summer at a comic shop near you!

DRAIN THE LIZARD What's green, horny and shoots rockets? *Wizard's* favorite lizard.

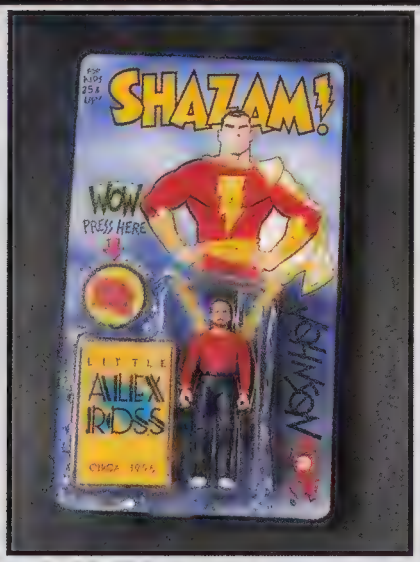
HOMEMADE HERO OF THE MONTH

THE BEST OF FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES

ALEX ROSS

Dave Johnson

Think only fans make homemade action figures? Guess again, bucko! Dave Johnson, cover artist on DC's recent 5th week JSA event, made this action figure of artist extraordinaire Alex Ross as part of an artwork trade by simply repainting one of Playmates' Captain Picard figures. For winning our "Homemade Hero" contest this month, Dave becomes the envy of his peers and takes home a Lady Pendragon lithograph, a *Lady Pendragon* issue and a Lady Pendragon action figure, all signed by Matt Hawkins.



They see all...know all...and aren't very impressed with your grades...
Dark Horse Comics

DARK HORSE COMICS®

Hey!

Do you want in on the fun? To enter the homemade figure contest, send at least TWO well-lit, clear, color photographs (No Polaroids, and put 'em in cool or funny poses!), along with your name, address, a DETAILED DESCRIPTION of how you created your figure, your full phone number (including area code) and even e-mail address to:

HOMEMADE HEROES
c/o Wizard Entertainment
P.O. Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

WHOLE LOTTA QUAKE-IN' GOIN' ON

Fans who missed out on ReSaurus' action figure line based on the hit video game *Quake II* will have another chance later this summer with Quake II: Upgrade 1.5. While these figures are essentially repaints of the original line, they also feature resculpted heads and accessories, along with brand new paint schemes to create new characters. The line will include Marine Viper, Female Marine Lotus, Tank Commander and Iron Maiden.

ToyFare assistant editor Tom Palmer Jr. is always grossed out by that scene in "Lost Boys" when Kiefer Sutherland turns a pint of rice into a pint of maggots. Man, sick.

SHAKE 'N' QUAKE Marine Viper, Female Marine Lotus and Iron Maiden from Quake II.

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stuff

COMIC BOOK MERCHANDISE YOU CAN BUY...

By David Borak and the *Wizard* Staff

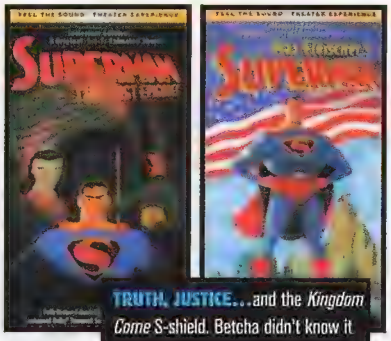
Who among us doesn't like stuff? Whether it's Superman's Supercolt 45, the JLA Spin the Bottle Set or Samaritan's Hair Dye, we're all suckers for comic-related merchandise. Each month, *Wizard* will strive to show the latest and super-neatest in comic book statues, posters, pins, magnets, shirts and other goodies.

In short, if it's cool, and if it's stuff, you'll find it here.

RACING HARLEY Run all you want, you can't bust outta this cel.

HARLEY'S PADDED CEL

Van Eaton Galleries and Warner Bros. bring you the limited edition Batman "Mad Love" animation cel from the Batman animated series ($375 unframed). The cel is taken from the famous episode also titled "Mad Love" that revealed the origin of the Joker's favorite girl, Harley Quinn. This 16-field cel is limited to 500, measures 16 1/2" X 10 1/2", and comes with a "Mad Love" comic book as an added bonus. You can purchase this cel through the Van Eaton Website at http://www.vegalleries.com or by calling them at (800) 599-3693.



TRUTH, JUSTICE... and the *Kingdom Come* S-shield. Betcha didn't know it came from the '40s cartoons.

THE MAN OF REEL-TO-REEL

See how well the Man of Steel has aged in the "Superman: The Lost Episodes" recordings, now available through Box Lorber Home Video. Eight of Max Fleisher's 1940s animated Superman shorts have been restored to their original breathtaking color with enhanced Dolby sound as well as additional music and sound effects. "Superman: The Lost Episodes" is available on VHS or DVD ($19.98 each) this June.

FANBOYS MAKE MUSIC

If you like listening to tunes while you read your comics, try Ookla the Mok. These fanboys from Buffalo, N.Y. make infectiously groovy music, and the lyrics are loaded with comic book references from Ben Reilly to the Super Skrull. One song, "Arthur Curry," sparked angry e-mails from Peter David! Check out their Website at www.otmfan.com to order their albums and see why comic pros like Mark Waid, Neil Gaiman and Devin Grayson all give Ookla the thumbs up.

IT'S NO SECRET This CD proves comic geeks can sing in high voices.

CHRONIC FASHION

Boy, Kevin Smith is so popular, he's had to don a mask to hide from all his fans. He and buddy Jason Mewes also fight crime as Bluntman and Chronic! Graphitti Designs presents the Bluntman & Chronic T-shirt based on Mike Allred's new comic book ($16.95, $19.95 for XXL). The 100% cotton T-shirt features Bluntman and Chronic screenprinted in full color. Smoke it out this June and get the munchies afterwards.

"WE WANT MARY JANE!" And no, they ain't talkin' about Spidey's wife!

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS RETAILER

IN THE BUFF Even with clothes on, this vamp's a keeper.

SLAYIN' STATUE

Varner Studios brings teen vampire hunter Sarah Michelle Gellar to your living room with the Buffy the Vampire Slayer Resin Statue ($129.95). Based on the likeness of ol' SMG, the creature-killin' cutie stands on a rock-strewn graveyard base wearing a lavender sweater and tight pants. This 12-inch statue comes fully painted and is limited to just 3,000 units, so stake yours in May.

HOT STUFF!!!!

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

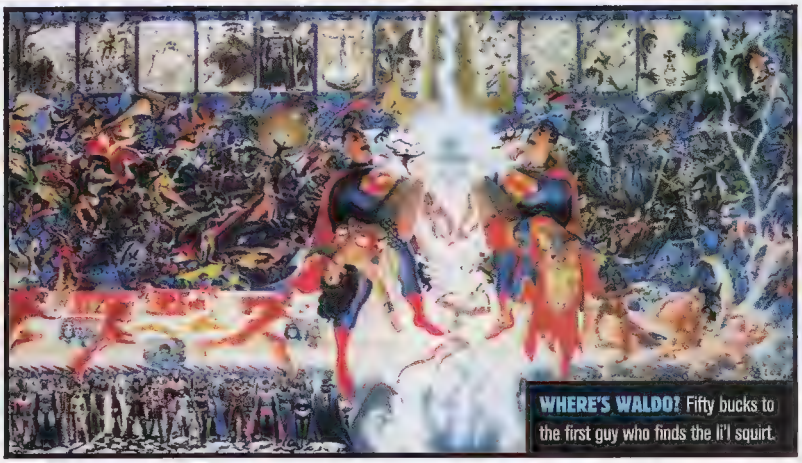
CRAPPER ATTACK

The outlawed journalist from *Transmetropolitan* is captured in a new statue by sculptor William Paquet. This 5-inch-tall Spider Jerusalem Medium Statue ($89.95) from DC Comics is based on designs by Darick Robertson and features Spider enjoying, uh, some quiet time with his two-headed cat. It's limited to just 2,500 editions and will be available November 17. Hope he's got enough paper.

CAN IT Nothing says "art" like a bald guy on a toilet.

CRISIS ON INFINITE POSTERS

The wraparound dust jacket to the *Crisis on Infinite Earths* hardcover has been reproduced as a poster! The Crisis on Infinite Earths Poster ($24.95) was painted by Alex Ross over pencils by George Pérez and features just about every character in the DC Universe. Packaged with the poster is a black-and-white key identifying all 562 characters! This huge 65″ X 28″ poster will be in stores July 7.



WHERE'S WALDO? Fifty bucks to the first guy who finds the li'l squirt.

stuff

SLIMFAST Look at that trim waist. Having no legs cuts down the pounds, too.

BACK IN BLACK

Bowen Designs brings you the mini-bust of the newest Marvel Knight, the Black Panther. The Black Panther Resin Mini-Bust ($30) stands 5" tall with his arms crossed menacingly (he has no legs, since this is only a bust).

This full color baby was sculpted by Randy Bowen and comes in a color collector's box. Look for it in June.

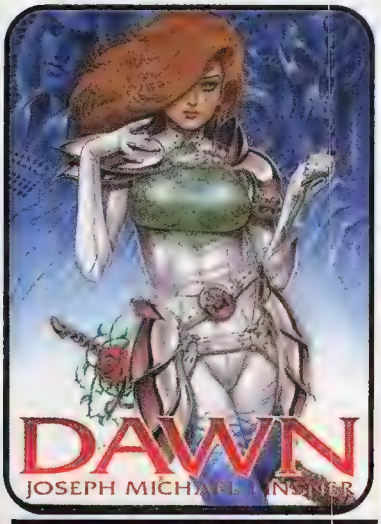
A WONDERFUL RING

Although we're not sure if Wonder Woman ever even had a ring, now you can become a Wonder Woman—or Girl, or Troia, or whatever the heck Donna Troy's calling herself—with DC Comics' Wonder Woman Sterling Silver Ring ($79.95). This cool lookin', .925-sterling-silver ring features the Wonder Woman logo with a star on either side. It's available in sizes six through 13 (whole sizes only). Look for it in stores August 11.

STERLING SILVER But will it block bullets?

DAWN GETS MOUSY

Surf the web with Dawn at your fingertips with the official Dawn Mousepad from Sirius ($11.95). This 9 1/2-inch by 7 3/4-inch, full-color mousepad features Dawn painted by Joseph Michael Linsner. Look for it everywhere this June.



DO MICE LIKE MILK? Surf the hills and valleys of the Web on your Dawn mousepad.

SNOW MAN'S LAND

Seems it's always snowing in Gotham. DC Comics presents the Batman Snow Globe ($79.95), available in stores October 27. Sculpted by William Paquet, this 7 1/2-inch-tall by 4 1/2-inch-wide snow globe features a sculpted, cold-cast, porcelain miniature Batman standing over the Wayne family grave inside a snowy globe. Limited to just 3,000 units, the globe rests on a funky, inscribed, cold-cast porcelain base.

SNOW JOB Play God and control Gotham City's weather from your very own bedroom.

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

YO! Are you a company who sells stuff cool enough to make the grade here? Let us be the judges of that. Send any info and/or samples to:

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video STUFF

By Matthew Danish

What? Do you need us to draw a picture? We took a bunch of video games, locked ourselves away and played 'em 'til our thumbs fell off. We don't pretend to be experts, just fun-lovin' folks who like our salsa spicy, our couch cushy and our video games kick-ass...here's what floated our boat, or not.

PRINCE OF PERSIA 3-D

Fans of the *Prince of Persia* PC series during the early '90s will be glad to hear that Red Orb will be shipping *Prince of Persia 3-D* for consoles this October. Jordan Mechner, creator of the original *Prince of Persia*, has been enlisted as a design consultant. Though Mechner says in published reports he won't design levels, he'll consult on the storyline and design, making sure that Persia 3-D hits the original's high standards.

The basic story of this 3-D, third-person game is an Arabian Nights-style adventure. The marriage of the prince and princess has angered the princess' uncle, Assan, who decides to kidnap her. The prince awakes, as in the original story, trapped in a dungeon. He must defeat the prison guard to acquire a sword and begin a quest to rescue the princess; one which will take him through the street, across rooftops and onto a floating dirigible. Along the way, there are other prisoners to talk to, doors, an archery bow, patrolling guards and many puzzles to solve, as well as the original's trademark spike traps and falling walkways.

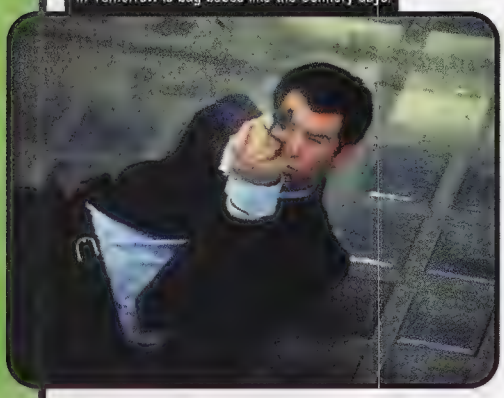
The game's Motion Factory *Motivate* animation program will give detail so realistic that Prince's chest will rise and fall as he breathes, he'll be able to turn doorknobs with his hands and pick up objects of different sizes. All fans of this 12th century Persian adventure should be on the lookout.

PERSIA RUGGED Kick some king's ass in *Prince of Persia 3-D.*

BE BOND TOMORROW!

MGM Interactive has signed a deal with Electronic Arts to bring the James Bond game *Tomorrow Never Dies* to the Sony PlayStation. A follow-up to 1997's *GoldenEye* for the Nintendo 64, this game marks Bond's first game for the PlayStation, and will feature a car chase, scenes where Bond swims in the ocean, tank battles and even levels where Bond will have the ability to fight on skis and freefall with a parachute. The game promises multiple spy missions backed by a machine gun, infrared goggles and retractable skis. And like *Goldeneye*, it will also support head-to-head, multi-player competition. *Tomorrow* explodes into stores this summer.

SHOOT BLANKS The only thing Bond can't do in *Tomorrow* is bag babes like the Connery days.



CLOCK TOWER SEQUEL

Fans of the PlayStation's original *Clock Tower*, rejoice! Agetec (formerly Ascii) will release *Clock Tower II* for the PlayStation in October 1999. In the vein of such famed horror games as *Resident Evil* and *Silent Hill*, *Clock Tower II* features an ominous and complex storyline. Players control a protagonist with a split personality and must switch back and forth between the different male and female personas, capitalizing on the strengths of each while fighting bad guys and solving puzzles. "The game's central objective involves discovering and overcoming George Maxwell, the main bad guy, who wears a red-horned devil's mask and will chase after you with a butcher knife," says Agetec spokesperson Robert Shreve. George's fellow bad guys will include a girl who's gone crazy and a horde of zombies! ■

UP AHEAD

Kick Donkey Kong butt...Blow up bad drivers...Be a hermaphrodite. Cheat at 'Oddworld'...and MORE!

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MARIO PARTY

MANUFACTURER: Hudson
PLATFORM: Nintendo 64
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $54.94, available now

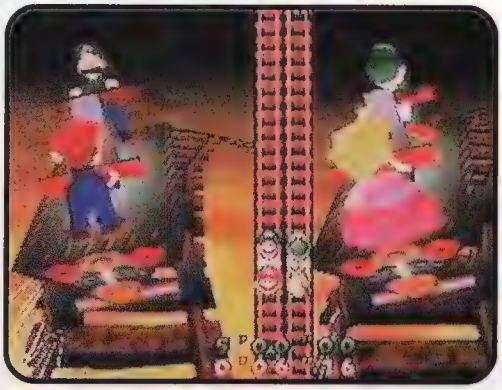
Wanna get this party started right? Then jump on *Mario Party*, a reprisal of classic Mario cartoon characters who each appear as competing "game-pieces" in an ever-evolving competitive board game. For one to four players, the game allows you to play as Yoshi, Mario, Wario, Peach, Donkey Kong or Luigi. Get three other friends and punch in!

Play starts with boards based on the Nintendo classics such as *Donkey Kong* and *Yoshi Island*. Players jump and hit a spinning dice cube that randomly determines how far your character will move in the quest for the most booty. Each space serves a different function, with some helping in the competition for stars and coins and others leading directly to mini-games.

Tallying at 56, the mini-games feature competition between players and/or computer-controlled characters. Nifty games include bowling, a treasure-hunt race, kart and bobsled racing, and even a hysterical test-your-rhythm dance sequence, and feature familiar music from the Mario series. Game winners get rewarded at the conclusion of each board with coins, and some games even allow the coins to be placed as bets on the outcomes.

TRY IT... If you like *Super Mario 64* or *Mario Kart 64* for the N64, you'll dig *Mario Party*.

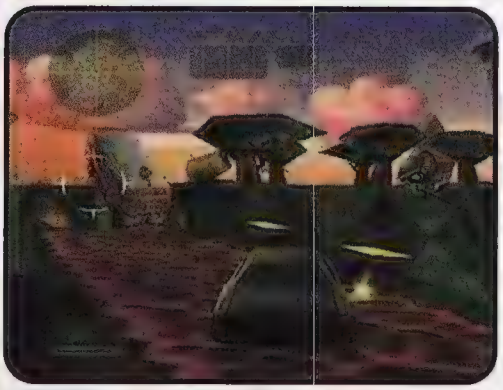
The games are simple to learn, and each opens with a screen giving clear directions. What makes *Mario Party* fun, though, are the opportunities for team play, with characters forming alliances against others or acting in concert against the computer. ■



PARTY HEARTY If you're looking for blood, guts and naked babes hanging all over the place... uh, *Mario Party* ain't for you, dude.

VIGILANTE 8

MANUFACTURER: Activison
PLATFORM: Ninendo 64
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $59.95, available now



ROAD RAGE You gotta love a world that lets you destroy your fellow man over and over and over again in *Vigilante 8*.

Gentlemen, start your engines! *Vigilante 8* for the N64 steers right into the car combat genre, à la *Twisted Metal*. The premise is simple: To clear a level, just blow up all the other cars, like most people wanna do on the L.A. Freeway.

There are, however, several different game modes. In "quest mode," for example, players choose one of 10 basic *Vigilante* characters, such as Chassey Blue and Slick Clyde, and set out in their specific vehicle to complete a four-level quest to either destroy or protect their surroundings. In this and all the modes, winning can unlock hidden characters and extra cars. In "arcade mode," players can choose up to 12 enemy cars to compete against simultaneously. In "survival mode," players select an arena and a vehicle, then see how many enemy cars they can destroy before they're finally eliminated. And like *Mario Party*, *V8* has extremely solid multi-players options for up to four people: It's possible to play one-on-one, two-on-two, every man for himself or even two players vs. two computer enemies. Multi-player combat is conducted via a four-way split screen.

TRY IT... If any games in the *Twisted Metal* series for the PlayStation get your motor runnin', you'll dig *Vigilante 8*.

While perhaps not quite surpassing the *Twisted Metal* series for the Sony PlayStation, *Vigilante 8*'s multi-player modes and straightforward violence makes it a welcome addition to anybody who's ever wanted to smash right into the guy who just cut him off on the highway. ■

MORE→

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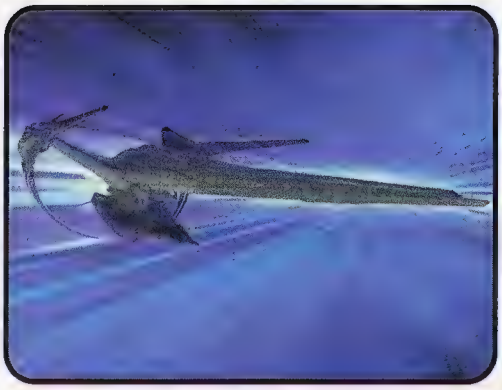
FOR MORE INFO, VISIT US ONLINE AT www.wizardworld.com

STAR OCEAN: THE SECOND STORY

MANUFACTURER: Enix Corporation
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $34.95, available in June



Want an elaborate plot? Enix's role-playing game *Star Ocean: The Second Story* for the PlayStation has plenty.

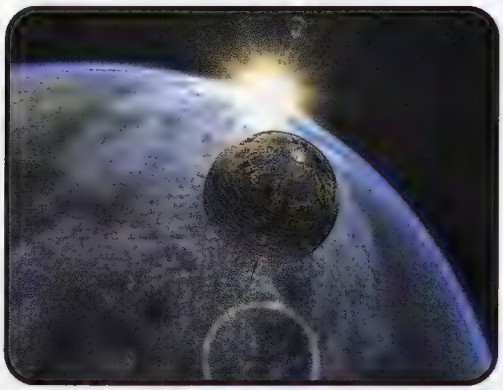
In this RPG, players can alternate between either a male protagonist (Claude C. Kenny, the lieutenant commander of the Earth Federation) or female (Rena Lanford, who specializes in spells). Either lead character is accompanied by a team of five other assorted characters, who help resolve many of the puzzles which the group will encounter as they explore planets. Claude and Rena are both necessary to solve puzzles and save planets from "The Sorcery Globe," a deadly phenomenon which causes monsters to cover the planet's surface.

Star Ocean's most innovative idea is the "private actions" feature in which an individual character may separate from the entire group to complete a mini-adventure, such as battling a monster on his or her own. Doing this can alter the course of the main adventure as new plot twists emerge.

TRY IT... Like RPGs like the first *Star Ocean*? Track down this sequel.

Beyond this, players can encounter other characters and, with the press of a button, barter or ask advice. And you can fight even when it's not your turn with numerous "killer moves" that can do heavy damage to an enemy monster. But look out—the monsters have their own moves as well.

With its traditional, novel-like "storyline" strengthened by side adventures and weapon creations, *Star Ocean* will make you hyperdrive to your local game store. ■



FIND THE OCEAN Roleplaying game? And here we thought we'd finally find out what happened to '80s pop star *Billy* Ocean...

SPECIAL MOVES & SECRET CODES

CHEATSHEET

ODDWORLD: ABE'S EXODDUS

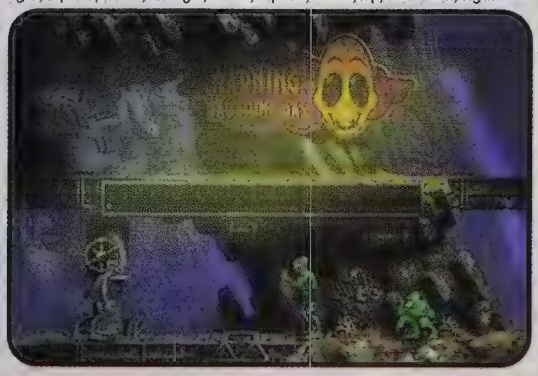
•Wanna kick ass as Abe on your Sony PlayStation? Here are a couple ways to be da man!

•**Advance to the next path:** During the game, hold R1 and press circle, circle, circle, x, x, square, square.

•**Level select:** On the main menu, hold R1 and press down, up, left, right, triangle, square, circle, triangle, square, circle, down, up left, right.

•**Invincibility:** During a game, hold R1 and press circle, triangle, square, x, down, down, down, circle, triangle, square, x.

•**View FMV sequences:** At the main menu hold R1 and press up, down, left, right, square, circle, triangle, circle, square, circle, up, down left, right.



webline

IT CAME FROM THE WORLD WIDE WEB

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Hehn. Hehn. Beavis and Butt-head quotes are cool. Huh. Huh-huh. Huh. Hehn.

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www.gamepreserve.com
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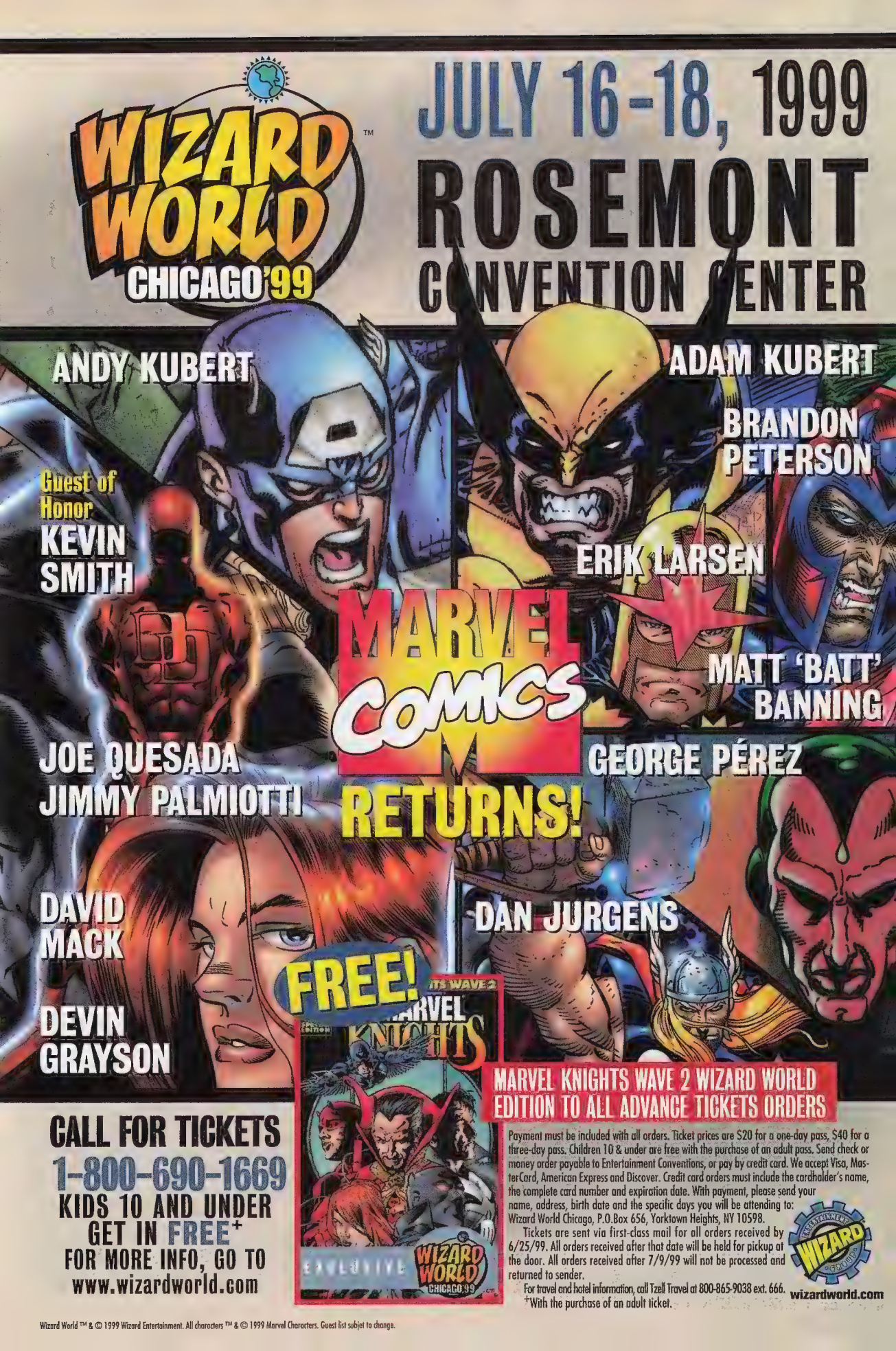
www.home.inreach.com/tbl9852/mario
Wanna learn more about the guy who kicked some Donkey Kong ass? A brief history of Nintendo's Mario.

www.pokemon.com
Wanna beat the *Pokémon* game for N64?This site's updated daily.

www.gameinformer.com
One'a the best sites for game previews, screen shots and cheat tips. ■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TOP 10 POKÉMON HEROES & VILLAINS

This list doesn't track the number of copies which a specific character sells each month. It doesn't pay attention to any kind of sales meter. In fact, this list is a roster of non-existent comic book characters with zero fan following. For now.

1 PUNISHU

(PUNISHER + PIKACHU)

Having witnessed the slaying of his family during a botched mob hit, Punishu was transformed into a living tool of revenge, casting a dark shadow of unforgiving retribution over a fearful underworld. Even the most hardened thugs and vicious skels feel their courage melt into their shoes when Punishu's battle cry of "Pika pika!" rings in the air. "He can't be real!" they cry as they run from a hail of bullets and Punishu's whirlwind of two-fisted blows. Oh, he's real all right, you pathetic, weak-willed dillweeds—as real as the pee running down your lily-livered leg.

2 SPIDER-MEOWTH

(SPIDER-MAN + MEOWTH)

Bitten by a radioactive arachnid, Spider-Meowth soon learned he had the strength of a dozen Pokémon, could cling to walls and even spin webs—any size! Spider-Meowth quickly did what anyone in his position would do, and cashed in on his abnormality by appearing on "Montel Williams." But when he arrived home that night, he found his uncle slain by Montel Williams himself! With great power comes great responsibility—a bitter lesson Spider-Meowth will never forget.

3 WOLVERNINE

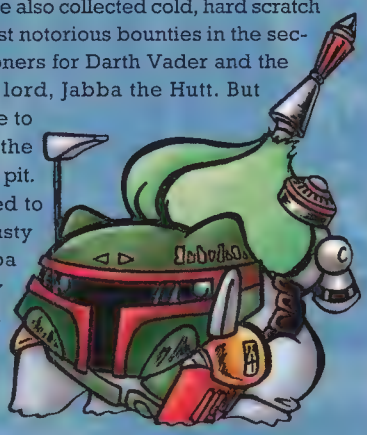
(WOLVERINE + ARCANINE)

Wolvernine is the best there is at what he does—and what he does isn't very nice. He takes great pleasure in turning his opponents into steaming piles of wet hamburger with the aid of his unbreakable adamantium-laced claws. His only memories are of a top-secret government laboratory located in the wilds of Canada which turned him into the ice-cold killing machine he is today. He's a half-man, half-bestial creature with no remorse whatsoever. He knows absolutely no fear. And if you pet him, he'll wag his furry tail!

4 BULBA FETT

(BOBA FETT + BULBASAUR)

Bulba Fett was more than just cool-looking Mandolorian armor—he was also the most feared bounty hunter in all the Imperial Empire. He also collected cold, hard scratch on some of the most notorious bounties in the sector, securing prisoners for Darth Vader and the legendary crime lord, Jabba the Hutt. But Bulba's glory came to an abrupt end in the belly of the Sarlacc pit. When he attempted to fly out with his trusty rocket pack, Bulba discovered toy executives had replaced it with a plastic duplicate, glued in place! Oops!



5 IRON MANKEY

(IRON MAN + MANKEY)

Sure, Iron Mankey's armor is so advanced that you could stick just about anyone in there and they'd be a formidable man-o-war (even that wacky Urkell guy). But Iron Mankey has one advantage others don't: his prehensile tail! With an added appendage, Iron Mankey has even keener control over his armor's weaponry. But mostly he just uses his tail to snag another Meister Braü out of the cooler.

6 ALASHAZAM

(SHAZAM + ALAKAZAM)

Chosen by the ancient Greek gods to be a defender of the Earth, young Alashazam was granted superhuman strength, flight and a knack for card tricks, all of which he uses to protect mankind from otherworldly threats. Fortunately, he can assume his superheroic identity in a flash during emergencies by uttering a single word—"Alashazam!" Unfortunately, that's the only word he knows.

7 COBRA CHARMANDER

(COBRA COMMANDER + CHARMANDER)

Cobra—a vast international organization hell-bent on ruling the world through violence, namely by undermining truth, justice and the American way. Their titular head? The enigmatic Cobra Charmander, a wanted felon known by security agencies primarily for his cute, squeaky voice. Cobra Charmander hides his visage behind a mask, fearing that no one would take a fuzzy orange dictator seriously. But nonetheless, crossing him means orange death!

8 VENOM-MOTH

(VENOM + VENOMOTH)

After being spurned by Spider-Meowth, the mysterious alien symbiote costume needed a new host—one that it found in the unlikeliest of places. Emerging from the dark recesses of Spider-Meowth's closet came Venom-moth, a deadly creature whose hunger for human brains is surpassed only by a taste for gaudy '70s leisure suits! Beware his acid drool!

9 KRAVEN THE HAUNTER

(KRAVEN THE HUNTER + HAUNTER)

Renowned as the greatest big game hunter on the planet, Kraven eventually sought the greatest of prizes: the pelt of Spider-Meowth. While pursuing his enemy, Kraven made a fatal error, meeting his untimely demise in a meat grinder, but becoming a tasty hamburger. After wolfing down the Kraven-burger, Spider-Meowth produced an ominous gas cloud—Kraven was reborn, now a ghostly menace that haunts his every waking moment with an ungodly stench!

10 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA SQUIRTLE

(TMNT + SQUIRTLE)

Squirtle was content working his after-school job taking out garbage at the local McDonald's until one fateful night, when he encountered a glowing green sludge seeping from the dumpster. Mistaking it for special sauce, he consumed it, unaware that it would transform him into the Teenage Mutant Ninja Squirtle! Now unable to control the growing ooze within him, he squirts it from his pores to combat evil!

MORT OF THE MONTH

ONE WEIRD-ASS POKEMORPH

MARROWAK (MARROW + MAROWAK)

Marrowak was once a member of the Morlocks, a group of society's castoffs living in the grimy sewers of Pallet Town. Now, if you've ever been to Pallet Town, you'd know they're awfully irresponsible about what they flush down the toilet—the sewers are filled with everything from alligators to radioactive isotopes. As a result, not only did Marrowak have to grow up in a stinkin' sewer, she also has bones growing out of her forehead, torso and other, nastier places! Not only does she have to sleep standing up, she's constantly chased by ravenous cucarachas. But Marrowak was able to overcome her obstacles and join other castoffs called the X-Men. But now the X-Men have problems: They want to ralf up their bologna sandwiches every time they look at her.

MORTOMETER

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS:

CONTEST

Name These Ultrons!

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One Avengers fan wins an original piece of Avengers art by George Pérez featuring a new character design appearing in the "Ultron Unlimited" story, a copy of *Avengers* #19 signed by Kurt Busiek and Pérez, a copy of the *Avengers: Visionaries* TPB and an *Avengers Masterworks* softcover.

FIRST PRIZE (10): Ten Ultroniacs each win a copy of *Avengers* #19 signed by Busiek and Pérez, a copy of the *Avengers: Visionaries* TPB and an *Avengers Masterworks* softcover.

SEE THAT BEAUTIFUL PIECE OF ART ON THE LEFT? The one with all the different Ultrons? We want you to name as many of the Ultrons as you can and tell us in which issue each one first appeared. Yes, each Ultron has a specific name. And none of them are named Bill or Stan. Think you can do that? Well, if you can, you'll be eligible to win all these fabulous prizes. We'll choose randomly from the entries with the most correct answers and pick our winners. Better start rereading those old *Avengers* comics!

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY MARVEL COMICS, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST COMIC COMPANY!

ATTORNEYS ASSEMBLE!

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Marvel Comics, their immediate families and Jarvis, the Avengers butler. He shouldn't have time to fill out the entry form if he's doing his job properly. Jarvis, get cleaning! Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Name These Ultrons!" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries and all rights relating thereto become the property of Wizard Entertainment, and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by July 30, 1999.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected based on random drawing from all properly completed entries by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than September 3, 1999. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about August 13, 1999.

For a list of winners, available after August 13, 1999, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: "Name These Ultrons!" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach your entry and put it in an envelope. Send to:

"Name These Ultrons!" Contest
c/o Wizard Entertainment
P.O. Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

"Name These Ultrons!" Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE JULY 30, 1999!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

E-mail address _____

picks

THE MUST-READ COMICS SHIPPING IN JUNE

book of the month

JSA #1

DC COMICS Mix Golden Age standbys with new blood like Atom Smasher and a saucy Star-Spangled Kid, and whaddya get? A new Justice Society of America! Ya also get death. An original JSAer kicks the bucket as a villain tries stealin' Dr. Fate's power, so a new JSA springs into action. "This is a book where tradition plays a huge role," says co-writer David Goyer. "We're giving these characters a chance to shine on their own, instead of just supporting others." By James Robinson, Goyer, Stephen Sadowski and Michael Bair. **$2.50**

AKIKO #34

SIRIUS Stranded space adventurer Spuckler falls ill, so fifth-grade go-getter (and designated Earth girl) Akiko has to rush into town for medicine. But when Akiko leaves, TV crews show up to celebrate the 100th birthday of the woman Akiko's gang has been staying with. What'll they think when they find a bunch of aliens? Only writer/artist Mark Crilley knows, and he'll tell ya for **$2.50.**

ASTRO CITY #18

WILDSTORM/DC Ex-con supervillain Steeljack has been trying to figger out just who's been killing the low-tier bad guys of Astro City. "And readers have been griping," writer Kurt Busiek says. "They've been asking, 'How come Steeljack just listens to other people's stories?' Well, he's been acting as a half-assed private detective, and that's what detectives do at first. They gather information. But now, he's got stuff figured out. He starts to take action." As Steeljack starts making his moves, Busiek promises "Thinkin', fightin', morose whinin', gun shootin', characterization out the wazoo, a secret supervillain headquarters, plus the introduction of a new mega-villain to Astro City." By Busiek, Brent Anderson and Will Blyberg. **$2.50**

AVENGERS #19

MARVEL Ultron is back, and as per his usual, he's mean. The living robot who wants to destroy all humanity and stuff is kicking the crap outta Avengers reservist Black Panther as a warm-up, so by the time he hits the Assemblers Assembled, all his gears and joints should be well-lubed and in good working order. And hey!—the Scarlet Witch does a belly dance! Hotcha! By Kurt Busiek, George Pérez and Al Vey. **$1.99**

AVENGERS FOREVER #9 (OF 12)

MARVEL That Kang—he's one bad dude! The undisputed heavyweight champion of the timestream is toying with a team of time-tossed Avengers (including Hank Pym as Yellowjacket *and* Hank Pym as Giant-Man!), and now he's gonna lay out his trump card: He's allied himself with the Kree Supreme Intelligence! Zoiks! By Kurt Busiek, Roger Stern, Carlos Pacheco and Jesus Merino. **$2.99**

MR TITLES DENOTED WITH AN MR CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

BATMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS Whodawhat?? The mysterious Batgirl gets unmasked and replaced by a *new* (and still mysterious) Batgirl in *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #120. Batbaddies Clayface and Poison Ivy fight for turf in *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #88. Batman and Robin get their feet dirty and join the Clay-Ivy fray in *Batman* #568. And over in *Detective Comics* #735, Batman thinks he's found the key to ending Gotham's current state of being a "No Man's Land" cut off from civilization. By Greg Rucka, Mike Deodato Jr., Sean Parsons, Dan Jurgens and Bill Sienkiewicz. **$1.99**

BIRDS OF PREY #8

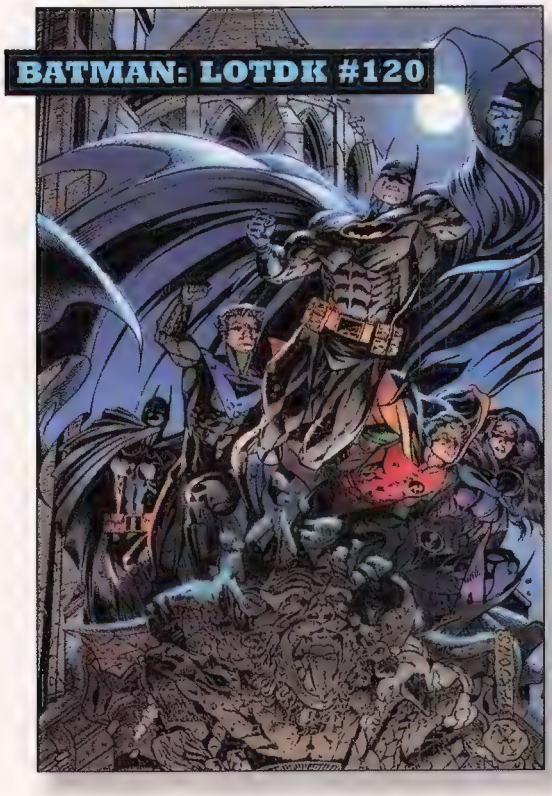
DC COMICS The *BoP* babes—Black Canary and Oracle—get a special guest visit from Nightwing. After they're done admiring his sexy legs, the gals reminisce about a date 'Wing and Oracle had, and intriguing insights about the relationship between the two are revealed. By Chuck Dixon, Greg Land and Drew Geraci. **$1.99**

BIRTH CAUL

EDDIE CAMPBELL COMICS No lie: Some kids are born with an extra flap o' skin that hangs down from their forehead and covers their face. It's called a birth caul. Sure, it's always removed right at birth...but in many cultures, people born "under the caul" are said to have the gift of prophecy. Follow one such birth caul-kid from death (huh?) back into new life. By Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, it's 48 pages for **$5.95.**

BLACK WIDOW #3 (OF 3)

MARVEL Natasha Romanoff, the old Black Widow, is dead. The new Black Widow who's stalkin' around in (pant...drool) skintight black leather is dukin' it out with the evil, insidious and probably Republican Colonel Khan,



newreleases

FIRST TIME OUT

100 BULLETS #1 **(Vertigo/DC)** What if you had a gun, 100 bullets and a license to kill? Us? We'd go lookin' for the cast of "Friends." But gangsta girl Dizzy Cordova's goin' for revenge. **$2.50**

BATMAN: BULLOCK'S LAW **(DC Comics)** No, he's not a garden implement! He's the Widow-Whacker, Gotham's newest serial killer. And tough, unshaven cop Harvey Bullock is takin' him down. **$4.95**

DARKCHYLDE SUMMER SWIMSUIT SPECTACULAR #1 **(WildStorm/DC)** Li'l Ariel Chylde, who usually runs around in ripped-up tank tops, now runs around in a swimsuit! How's that for a switch? **$3.95**

DC ONE MILLION 80-PAGE GIANT #1,000,000 **(DC Comics)** Return to the 853rd century with tales of Superman, Batman, Robin, Aquaman and more. **$4.95**

DEITY: REVELATIONS #1 **(Image)** Jamie, a Chinese food delivery girl from the Los Angeles of 2027, plays a pivotal part in an intergalactic war. Our recommendation: Order the moo goo gai pan. It's great. **$2.95**

EVIL ERNIE: DEPRAVED #1 **(Chaos!)** Only the Mississippi Wall separates humanity from the zombie nation. And Ernie's lookin' to tear it down! **$2.95**

GRENDEL: DEVIL CHILD #1 **(Dark Horse)** What's it like to be the adopted daughter of an assassin? Grendel's daughter Stacy'll fill ya in. **$2.95**

JSA SECRET FILES #1 **(DC Comics)** Supervillains take note: The secrets of DC's new Justice Society of America are revealed here. **$4.95**

MANHUNTER: THE SPECIAL EDITION **(DC Comics)** The classic 1974 Manhunter tale of big-game hunter Paul Kirk is reprinted, with 23 new pages added! **$9.95**

KABOOM #1 **(Awesome)** Geoff Sunrise is back! But this time, there's a new chick sharing the power of the explosive Kaboom cycle. **$2.50**

OZZY OSBOURNE MAGAZINE #1 **(Todd McFarlane Productions/Image)** Blimey! Our favourite British madman pisses everyone off and has a great time doing it. **$4.95**

PLASTIC MAN SPECIAL #1 **(DC Comics)** DC's plastic fantastic hero endorses basketball shoes. Honest. **$3.95**

SPAWN: THE UNDEAD #1 **(Todd McFarlane Productions/Image)** Spawn jumps smack-dab in the middle when Heaven and Hell interfere with humanity. **$1.95**

STARS AND S.T.R.I.P.E. #1 **(DC Comics)** There's a new Star-Spangled Kid! And this time, he's a she! And she's got a giant robot! Woo-wee! **$2.50**

SUPERMAN: LAST GOD OF KRYPTON **(DC Comics)** Something else survived the destruction of Krypton...and it's coming after Superman. **$4.95**

WILD TIMES **(WildStorm/DC)** What if WildStorm characters existed in different times and settings like the swinging '60s or the ol' West? You'd have funky Deathblow, DV8, Gen^{13}, Grifter and Wetworks "Wild Times" one-shots! **$2.50 each**

who's got his eyes on the Super-Soldier Serum. Just when all looks lost for the new girl on the block, help comes in the form of...Natasha Romanoff? What the heck's goin' on? Only Devin Grayson and J.G. Jones can sort it out. **$2.99**

BONE #37

CARTOON BOOKS It's the end of Act 2 for Bone. It's also what creator Jeff Smith calls "My Stan Lee/Jack Kirby-esque extravaganza issue. It's got everybody in it. Literally all the characters ever seen in Bone are here, and all the good guys and all the bad guys meet face to face for the first time." Seems war has been a-brewin' for quite some time, and that war kettle is set to spill over. As Fone Bone, his lovely sidechick Thorn and all their allies face off against an army of stupid, stupid rat creatures, it looks like the gang's all here! **$2.95**

BOX OFFICE POISON #14

ANTARCTIC PRESS It's the battle of the acronyms! The BoPs of Birds of Prey take on the BOPs of Box Office Poison in a fight to the finish! Oh, wait. Sorry. Wrong story. What really happens is that crotchety old comic artist Irving Flavor introduces some new characters while no-luck bookstore clerk Sherman looks for a new place to live. Oh, well. It woulda been a pretty lame battle anyway. Tough chicks beat publishing types any day o' the week. We oughtta know. By Alex Robinson. **MR. $2.99**

DAREDEVIL #10

MARVEL Tons-o-Fun is back! The Kingpin, Daredevil's fat, sweaty, fat, glommy, fat, 800-pound, fat arch-nemesis has returned, and Wendy's franchises everywhere tremble with fear! But the Man Without Fear ain't trembling, although maybe he oughtta be. Seems the Kingpin's got a new bad girl named Echo that he's siccin' on ol' Hornhead. By David Mack, Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti. **$2.50**

EARTH X #5 (OF 12)

MARVEL Hammer time! In the crazy Marvel future where everybody's got superpowers, co-writer Jim Krueger tells us that "This is our big Thor issue. Not only will the first four pages shed brand-new light on the origin of Thor, but it will give readers a new look into the nature of all Asgardians." And if ya don't care much for the hammer-swinger, not to worry. This ish is also jam-packed with (deep breath, now) the Inhumans, a batch of Doombots, Captain America, Daredevil, Reed Richards, Dr. Strange, the Starjammers and Wolverine. By Krueger, Alex Ross, John Paul Leon and Bill Reinhold. **$2.99**

HITMAN #40

DC COMICS Take our word for it: Them women types is nuthin' but trouble. Sure, Hitman Tommy Monaghan is tough. He's got X-ray vision and can read minds. But super-assassin Ringo Chen has actually beaten Death! So when Tommy and Ringo have a disagreement over a woman, well, the fur starts flyin'! By Garth Ennis, John McCrea and Gary Leach. **$2.50**

INHUMANS #10 (OF 12)

MARVEL Man's attacks on the Inhuman city of Attilan intensify, and the humans' co-conspirator stands revealed: Yep, it's Maximus the Mad, Inhuman gone wrong. Meanwhile, below the city, Woz the Alpha Primitive wages a war all his own. And we ain't talkin' about the card game, folks...By Paul Jenkins and Jae Lee. **$2.99**

INVISIBLES (VOL. 3) #8

VERTIGO/DC The backwards countdown to *Invisibles* #1 continues as guest-stars from all across time pop in for a visit. Lady Edith, King Mob's first love from the 1930s, says "Hello!", and famous 19th century pervert the Marquis de Sade tells you all about his vision of the future. Expect lots of spankings. By Grant Morrison, Sean Phillips and Jay Stephens. **$2.95**

IRON MAN #19

MARVEL He's lean, he's mean, he's the War Machine! Iron Man tussles with his darker double in the form of the black-armored, multi-gunned War Machine! By Kurt Busiek, Roger Stern, Sean Chen and Larry Stucker. And by the way, over in the *Iron Man 1999* annual, Shellhead's gotta stop a vampire that's sucking the energy right outta people. By Busiek, Joe Casey and Terry Shoemaker. **$1.99—#19; $3.50—*1999***

MADMAN COMICS #14

DARK HORSE Read carefully and please understand that we're not smokin' anything: Madman is floating at sea, trapped in the now-giant brain that used to be in the head of Dr. Boiffard. After busting outta the oversized gray matter with his rocket pack, Madman happens across a desert island that holds the key to his amnesiac past. And cannibals. By Mike Allred. We offer no promise as to his sobriety. **$2.95**

NIGHTWING #34

DC COMICS While the electrifyingly beautiful assassins of (Hubba hubba!) Double Dare clash with the

THE TOY MAGAZINE #25

ToyFare™

SPECIAL REPORT

STAR WARS®

STAR WARS CONQUERS THE WORLD

LADY DEATH

EXLUSIVE LIMITED FIGURE OFFER

ON SALE IN JULY

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WIZARD

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PROMETHEA #1

electrifyingly...uh...electric Electrocutioner, Nightwing makes a choice to help out his ol' buddy Batman in the "No Man's Land" that is Gotham City. By Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story. **$1.99**

PLANETARY #5

WILDSTORM/DC Since it's just not "Picks" without a word from Warren Ellis, here ya go: "Remember Doc Brass, legless wonder with an antique haircut and two sodding great big guns from #1? Brass is in Planetary's secret private hospital, relishing in sponge baths and having...a long conversation." That conversation involves a multiversal door opened by the Computer That Couldn't Be Shut Off. Ellis also promises a big payoff. "This is the issue where things begin to link together. Here I leap up manfully and say, 'Look! Look, you bastards! I had a plan all along! All this makes sense! Now worship me, doubting toe-rags, for I am Master Storyteller!'" By Ellis and John Cassaday. **$2.50**

PREACHER #52

VERTIGO/DC Ever wonder how Preacher Jesse Custer's beautiful-but-deadly assassin/girlfriend Tulip got to be so beautiful? Well, it's largely genetics, plus she's always done a good job of taking care of her skin. Ever wonder how she got to be so deadly? Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon reveal all here. **MR. $2.50**

PROMETHEA #1

WILDSTORM/DC College student Sophie Bangs is armpit deep in research on the ancient warrior goddess Promethea. But when an eternal enemy is awakened, Sophie might have to become Promethea just to stay alive! Special monkey cameo: In the world in which Promethea takes place, "Weeping Gorilla Comix" is all the rage! No lie! By Alan Moore, J.H. Williams and Mick Gray. 40 pages for **$3.50.**

alsoshipping

MORE BOOKS TO GET

CAPTAIN AMERICA BOOKS (Marvel) Cap's sidekick Bucky remains dead, but he's back in the double-sized flashback *Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty* #12. Meanwhile in *Captain America* #20, we learn the secrets of the most important co-star of all–Cap's shield. ***SoL*–$2.99; *Cap*–$1.99**

DARKNESS #25 (Top Cow/Image) Seven come 11, baby! Daddy needs a new pair of shoes! Jackie Estacado is Vegas-bound in a double-sized anniversary spectacular. **$3.50**

FANTASTIC FOUR #20 (Marvel) The Ruined, the villains from *FF* (vol. 3) #1, are back. That's the bad news. The good? They're looking to destroy France. **$1.99**

FATHOM #7 (Top Cow/Image) Aspen learns a teensy bit more about her mysterious and watery past. **$2.50**

FLASH #151 (DC Comics) Monkey alert! Monkey alert! Gorilla City invades America and only the Flash can stop the hairy, pit-scratchin' menace! **$1.99**

GREEN LANTERN #115 (DC Comics) FedEx screws up and delivers the wrong package to Green Lantern's house. So Plastic Man and Booster Gold show up to set things right. No, really. **$1.99**

HULK #5 (Marvel) Somethin' stinks like swamp gas, and this time it's not a comic store; it's the muck-encrusted Man-Thing! **$1.99**

SPAWN #87 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) Talk about a personality conflict! Spawn takes on his own alter ego, Al Simmons! **$1.95**

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS (Marvel) More evil machinations of Norman Osborn are revealed in *Spider-Man: Chapter One* #10. Reality is completely outta whack in *Amazing Spider-Man* #8, and Bullseye, the perfect assassin, pays a visit in *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #8. **$1.99 each; *Chapter One*–$2.50**

STAR WARS BOOKS (Dark Horse) Amidala, teen queen of (Tee-hee!) planet Naboo, tries to break a blockade in *The Phantom Menace–Queen Amidala.* **($2.95)**; Jedi Qui-Gon Jinn shows young Ben Kenobi the ropes in *The Phantom Menace–Qui-Gon Jinn* **($2.95)**; "I'd like to buy a vowel please" Ki-Adi-Mundi lands on Tatooine in *Star Wars* #7 **($2.50)**; and rebels with biiiig eyes kick ass in *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi–Manga* #1 **($9.95).**

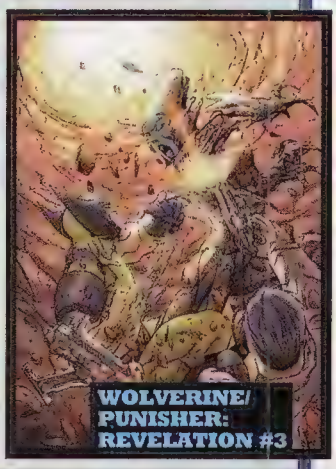
SUPERMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) Superman takes on Riot, the self-duplicating supervillain, in *Superman: The Man of Tomorrow* #14. Six bad guys team up on Big Blue in *Action Comics* #756. An innocent man is on the run from Supes in *Superman: The Man of Steel* #91. And in *Superman* #147, the JLA put in a guest appearance. Again. **$1.99 each**

UNDERTAKER #4 (Chaos!) It's all in the family as Kane, the Undertaker's insane brother, shows up for some clock-cleanin' action. **$2.95**

WITCHBLADE #33 (Top Cow/Image) Police detective Sara Pezzini's nosy new partner knows more about the Witchblade than he should. Punk. **$2.50**

WOLVERINE #141 (Marvel) Mistrust between Wolvie and his X-Men teammates grows. As does Wolvie's hair. **$1.99**

WOLVERINE/PUNISHER: REVELATION #3 (Marvel) Wolvie and Punny go underground to stop a deadly illness and a deadly menace. **$2.99**



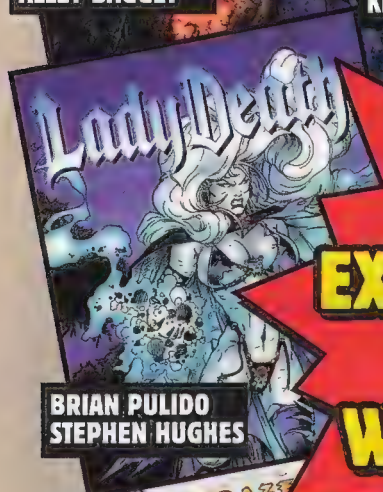
WOLVERINE/ PUNISHER: REVELATION #3

JULY 16-18, 1999
ROSEMONT
CONVENTION CENTER

MATT HAWKINS
ALLEY BAGGET

J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI
KEU CHA

IAN CHURCHILL



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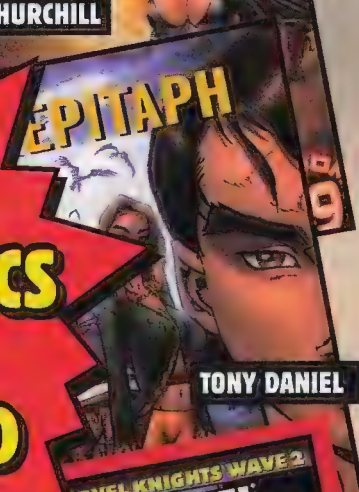
STEPHEN HUGHES



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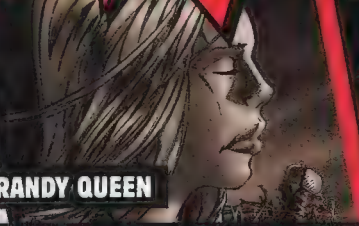

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SPANK THE MONKEY #1

ARROW COMICS Y'know, nothing gets us more lathered up than "spanking" and "monkeys!" That having been said, Spank—comics' nastiest little monkey—goes gonzo with the kind of whimsical observations and social commentaries that only a simian can dole out. In this pulse-pounding ish, Spank tells ya all about Dr. Jack Kervorkian (Really a nice guy!), sport-utility vehicles (They're just trucks, you stupid yuppies!) and all sorts o' other stuff. It's all in a monkey's day's work. By Randy Zimmerman. **MR. $2.95**

ROBIN #67

DC COMICS Yow! Somebody broke out the Great Big Book of Supervillain Names and found a couple o' real doozies! Gearhead and Tommy Mangles try to stop Robin and Nightwing (man, that boy gets around) from crossing into Gotham via a long-abandoned, underground tunnel. By Chuck Dixon, Staz Johnson and Stan Woch. **$1.99**

SAVAGE DRAGON #62-#63

IMAGE Press the tux and put on them dancin' shoes! Wedding bells chime as the Dragon gets married to his new sweetie Jennifer in #62. But after the nuptials (Love that word! Yeah, it means "wedding," but it just sounds dirty!), any thought of a honeymoon's gotta take a back seat when a gaggle of ghastly Dragon enemies decide that now's the perfect time to kick Dragon's green ass. "The biggest deal for Dragon fans is that they'll finally get to see who's behind OverLord's mask," writer/artist Erik Larsen says. "I know that's a big deal for a lot of folks." By Larsen. **$2.50 each**

THOR #14

MARVEL Guest-star Iron Man does a fly-by as the armored Avenger helps the Thunder God return the last of the lost Norse artifacts to the rebuilt Asgard. Shellhead also helps Thor stomp the Absorbing Man into the turf. But the real juice, according to writer Dan Jurgens, comes from Thor's old girly-friend and new mortal identity. "Jane Foster finally confronts Jake Olson about the possibility of him being Thor," Jurgens says. "At the same time, another old Thor foe shows up in the least likely way." By Dan Jurgens, Mike McKone and Mark McKenna. **$1.99**

THUNDERBOLTS #29

MARVEL Jolt is a teenage chick who shoots sparks. Charcoal is a teen guy who looks like a refugee from a bag of Match-Lite briquettes. And they're the only ones standing between the Thunderbolts and certain death? And they're taking on Graviton, master of gravity? Hoo boy. Things don't look good for *Thunderbolts* #30. By Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley and Scott Hanna. **$1.99**

TITANS #6

DC COMICS Green Lantern Kyle Rayner swings by for a visit, just in time to put out some fires. Those fires? They're raging through Harlem as the Panzer and his neo-Nazi butthead buddies decide they're willing to burn down a whole neighborhood just to get at the Titans—including, of course, the ever guest-starring Nightwing. By Devin Grayson, Mark Buckingham and Wade Von Grawbadger. **$2.50**

TOM STRONG #3

WILDSTORM/DC Holy socks! Tom Strong, the smartest, strongest, pulp-inspiredest hero there ever was, fights off the transdimensional menace of the Aztechs! And as a special double-bonus, Strong's gorilla sidekick King Solomon eats bananas and wears a bow tie. Woo hoo! By Alan Moore, Chris Sprouse and Al Gordon. **$2.95**

TRANSMETROPOLITAN #24

VERTIGO/DC It's election day! A new president will soon be sittin' in the White House, and Spider Jerusalem is drunk outta his gourd at his election-night party! Come the 'morrow, the crusty journalist will have to write his next column. But tough luck, Spider—the new prez is not the man you wanted for the job. By Warren Ellis, Darick Robertson and Rodney Ramos. **MR. $2.50**

UNCANNY X-MEN #371

MARVEL The X-Men return home from space, empty

SAVAGE DRAGON #62

the mailbox, return all those answering machine messages, feed the dog and realize that a techno-organic virus is running rampant, with the mutant-studyin' Muir Island Research Center as ground zero. By Alan Davis, Jimmy Cheung and Mark Morales. **$1.99**

X-MEN #91

MARVEL Holy crap on a stick! Someone's hijacked the S.H.I.E.L.D. Helicarrier, and the X-Men come runnin' to the rescue! Who could pull such a dastardly deed? Only Alan Davis and Andrew Robinson know for sure. Hey! Wanna know which major Marvel menace pulled the hijacking? Find out in the *X-Men 1999* annual, and thrill to the introduction of three new tech-based heroes! By Alan Davis and Rick Leonardi. **$1.99—#91; $3.50—*1999***

characterprofile

RAP SHEET

SPIDER-GIRL

SENSE SATION By closing her eyes and trusting her spider-sense, May predicted exactly where the teleporting Mr. Nobody would pop up and pounced on him. (*Spider-Girl* #1)

STICKY FINGERS May can stick to surfaces just as well as her old man. Too bad she forgot that when fighting Nova, who threw her for a loop before she could remember to just stick it to him. (*Spider-Girl* #7)

SLAP ON THE WRISTS May, using the same exact web shooters her dad used, once outsmarted the Green Goblin by webbing up his hand while he was holding an explosive pumpkin bomb. (*Spider-Girl* #0)

DEADBEAT DAD May once beat the crap outta her own dad when the Venom symbiote escaped and took control of Peter Parker! (*Spider-Girl* #5)

LOVE BUG Spider-Girl has a big crush on the youngest member of the Fantastic Five, Franklin Richards. Aww... (*Spider-Girl* #3)

BEEFCAKE Using her spider-proportioned strength, Spider-Girl broke out of Ladyhawk's metallic "Ladyhawk hoops" and ripped Mr. Nobody's teleportation circuitry right outta his suit. (*Spider-Girl* #6, #8)

DODGE 'EM Spider-Girl's agility is so great, she even ducked a punch from Fantastic Five powerhouse the Thing. (*Spider-Girl* #3)

USED DUDS Spider-Girl's threads look familiar? They should. They belonged to her deceased Uncle Ben. (Yep, the ol' Spidey-Clone.) When her dad was in trouble, she found 'em in the attic and slid right in. (*Spider-Girl* #0)

DADDY'S GIRL Talk about a tough trainer! Spider-Girl gets spider-lessons from her dad, the original Spider-Man. (*Spider-Girl* #9)

BABY'S GOT BACK Sure, Spider-Girl's got a killer bod–just don't tell *her* that. She once punched out Killerwatt for commenting on her "pretty little rump." (*Spider-Girl* #9)

ORIGIN

Fifteen years in the future, high-school student May Parker led a cozy life with her loving parents, Peter and Mary Jane. She never knew about her father's secret past...until Normie Osborn took up his grandfather's demented legacy as the Green Goblin and threatened the Parker family. May finally learned the truth: her father was once the amazing Spider-Man, and she had inherited his abilities. Donning an old Spidey costume, May rescued her folks from the Green Goblin. Now, the sense of responsibility she inherited from her father drives her to continue as Spider-Girl.

NOW APPEARING

Besides poppin' up every month in *Spider-Girl*, this summer sees the first *Spider-Girl Annual*, a 64-page extravaganza that will reveal the most shocking event the MC2 universe has ever seen. "We're going to have a big lead story where May witnesses the greatest tragedy of her life–the death of her parents," says *Spider-Girl* writer/editor Tom DeFalco. "It's not a hoax, not an imaginary story. We're also introducing a new villain, Misery, and the Green Goblin will come back." Down the road, look for Spider-Girl to discover some all-new powers her father never had.

BACK IN TIME

A modern teen escapes pressures of school life to an Oz-like ancient China

Mark Twain's Connecticut Yankee visited King Arthur's court. Dorothy got whisked to Oz. And Bill and Ted roamed, well, all over...but not too many folks took the time to check in on ancient China. At least, not until Yû Watase's manga *Fushigi Yûgi* came along.

When junior-high schoolgirls Miaka and Yui open an antique tome at the library, they are whisked back to a mystical pseudo-China, a wondrous but dangerous land filled with marauding slavers, opulent palaces and knights in shining armor. The mysterious book "The Universe of the Four Gods" promises to grant a wish to the girl who reads it all the way through, but Miaka didn't know it meant she had to live its adventures herself!

ROB LOWE ALERT *Fushigi Yûgi*'s star Miaka (bottom) pines for Tamahome (above), a Han Solo-like rogue who might get thrown in the clink if he reciprocates–she's in junior high, dude!

Separated from Yui and trapped in this strange new world, Miaka learns that she can indeed have a wish granted—if she agrees to become the head priestess of the Suzaku empire and assemble a band of seven preordained warriors. It sounds suspiciously like a roleplaying-game plot to Miaka, but she agrees—her wish is that she can return home and maybe even get into the elite school her mom is pressuring her to enter. Now all she needs to do is find her champions in an empire of a million souls...

Fushigi Yûgi ("The Mysterious Play") is a sweeping saga; part fantasy, part historical romance and part action-adventure. As in the similar "Wizard of Oz," a young heroine seeks to evade the pressures of adolescent life by escaping to a dazzling world, only to discover that her troubles—borne of a conflicting desire for independence and the security of belonging—aren't a matter of locale; they're just a part of growing up.

Watase has an excellent grasp of characterization and writes great subtext to fill out her players. Miaka initially comes across as a bubble-headed glutton, but behind that façade lies an iron will and a fierce loyalty to her friends. She's just an average student, but she's destroying herself cramming to get into super-exclusive Jonan High just to please her mother, a bitter divorcée who lives life vicariously through her daughter. Yui, Miaka's best friend, is an extremely bright and ambitious girl set on entering Jonan as well. She loves Miaka, but she also has an arrogant streak, deflating Miaka's aspirations whenever she dares to dream of bettering herself—truth is, she's intensely jealous of her friend, though she'll never admit it to herself.

Japanese girls have this thing for androgynous characters, and *Fushigi Yûgi*, like many shojo manga, derives a good bit of humor from its resident pretty boys, some of whom are almost *too* good at being pretty. One fellow in particular pulls off a stunning deception. Suffice it to say that some girls are best admired from afar.

Fushigi Yûgi begins on a fairly comedic tone, but does have its dark moments as the story unfolds—usually presented in heightened, melodramatic fashion. Beneath its playful exterior are betrayals of trust, acts of self-sacrifice and violations of the body and spirit.

Fortunately, Watase is a talented storyteller, and heavy scenes are leavened with love affairs, plot twists and swashbuckling battles. But we are always brought back to the realization that this mystical Chinese storybook world is not fantasyland, and bad things can and do happen to good people. A brutal rape, for example, marks a major turning point in the plot—one which threatens to lead to catastrophe not only for ancient China, but

BY PAUL SUDLOW

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for the modern world as well.

Fushigi Yûgi is hugely popular in the States. Japanese videos subtitled by fans were going gangbusters on the Internet two years ago, and there are a number of Websites devoted to fan translations of the original Japanese manga. *Animerica Extra* (the American magazine in which *Fushigi Yûgi* is serialized) Editor Bill Flanagan thinks he knows the secret of the manga's success: "It's a good mix of comedy and romance, which brings in the guys and the girls; Watase really knows how to balance [the two]. We get a lot of letters from young girls."

That shouldn't come as a surprise, given that females were Watase's original audience. But how many American comics can claim that a large portion of its readers are female? Not many. *Animerica Extra* can, and this is due in large part to *Fushigi Yûgi*. *Animerica Extra*, a monthly manga anthology, runs for $4.95.

Wizard Entertainment editor Paul Sudlow enters a magical world when he reads the book "Everybody Poops."

ANIMEPICK

ANIME FILM OF THE MONTH

Mobile Suit Gundam 0083: Stardust Memory Vol. 1

(Bandai Entertainment, 58 minutes, $19.98 dubbed or $29.98 subtitled)

Four years ago, the rogue, space-based Duchy of Zeon hurled a 20-mile-long space colony into Australia, wiping out a huge chunk of the continent and sparking a devastating world war. After a bloody year of combat, the Earth Federation triumphed, and there have been three years of peace. But even as rookie Federation pilot Kou Uraki and his pals train for future conflicts at an Australian military base, legendary Zeon ace pilot Anavel Gato plots to revive past glories by stealing a new Gundam prototype, a giant mecha equipped with nuclear weaponry...

The "Gundam" saga has stood tall as the giant of the anime world since its inception in 1979. And no wonder: Its potent combination of high-tech mecha, political scheming and memorable heroes and villains draws fans like nothing else. "Stardust Memory" has all that in spades, and running a mere 13 episodes, it's a good place to get a taste of the "Gundam" phenomenon. If you like what you see, there are plenty more where this came from. "Stardust Memory" is a six-tape series; this first tape contains two episodes. ■ PS

MANGAPICKS

MUST READ JAPANESE COMICS SHIPPING IN JUNE

Star Wars: The Return of the Jedi—Manga #1

DARK HORSE COMICS

So, any good movies coming out in May? Yeah, like you don't know! If you wanna wet your Star Wars whistle, Dark Horse is bringing on the final chapter in the *Star Wars* manga, with art by Shin-ichi Hiromoto. Join Luke, Leia and the others as they free Han Solo from that vile gangster Jabba the Hutt. See the Rancor rampage; watch our heroes being lead to their execution; see if Fett screams like a woman in the Japanese comic like he does in the movie. **$9.95**

Martian Successor Nadesico #1

CPM COMICS

Speaking of "Star Wars" and space opera, CPM is kicking off the U.S. debut of Kia Asamiya's *Martian Successor Nadesico*, a sci-fi saga already popular with the anime crowd. Aliens have attacked our colonies on Mars, and it seems Earth's military is inadequate to repel them. Earth's best hope lies in the *Nadesico*, a super battleship manned by a nearly all-female crew sent out to kick alien butt. Unfortunately, the crew seems more intent on fighting each other than the enemy! **$2.95**

Outlanders Vol. 6 TPB

DARK HORSE COMICS

Wow, Earth's been destroyed by any number of alien ships in sci-fi stories past, but try eight million of 'em on for size! That's how many the Santovasku empire has sent to dispatch our naughty blue marble, because Kahm, the emperor's sexy daughter, has fallen for an Earth guy and now leads the Earth rebellion! Johji Manabe's *Outlanders* is one of the longest-running manga in America, and he's still delivering the goods. **$14.95**

Slayers Book One: Medieval Mayhem TPB

CPM COMICS

Slayers, that madcap manga featuring the fantasy adventures of mage Lina Inverse and her warrior pal Gourry, gets its first graphic novel this month. Join our merry duo as they foil a master thief, dabble in court intrigue, and wreck a spoiled noblewoman's plans to collect every handsome man in the kingdom. Story by Hajime Kanzaka and art by Rui Ararizumi, the creators of the *Slayers* franchise. *Medieval Mayhem* collects the first six issues of the CPM series. **$15.95** ■ PS

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COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH by Lars Pearson

MARKET WATCH

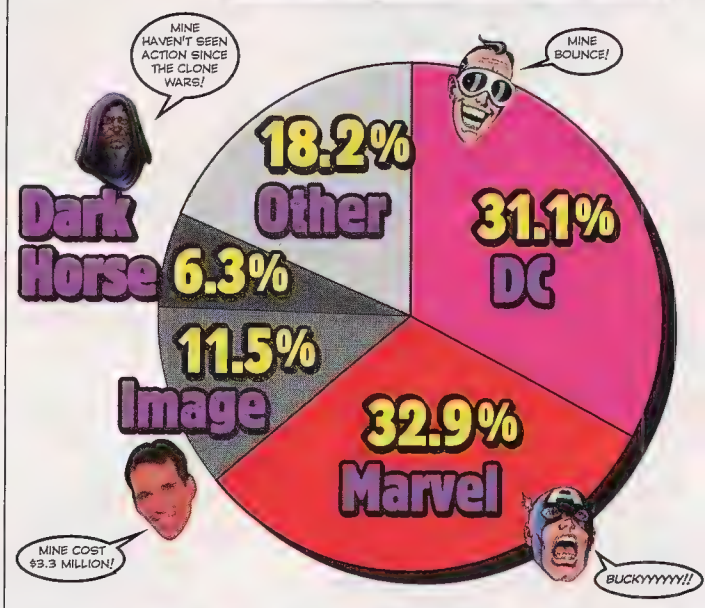
POKÉMON PREVAILS!

Prices soar as collectors catch 'em all

It's getting hotter than Charmander's fiery breath.

Please don't tell us you haven't heard about Pokémon, the scorching Japanese phenomenon that's taking America by storm with tales of characters who collect Pokémon creatures to become "Pokémon Masters." Current *Pokémon* comics remain in top demand, and are making previous sales figures for publisher Viz Communications look like bird feed.

Blame the comic's success on Pokémon's mainstream appeal. Since November, Pokémon anime videos have sold 200,000 copies stateside. The cartoon remains the number one property on both the WB and Cartoon networks. The *Pokémon* collectible card game now ranks behind only *Magic: The Gathering* in that field.



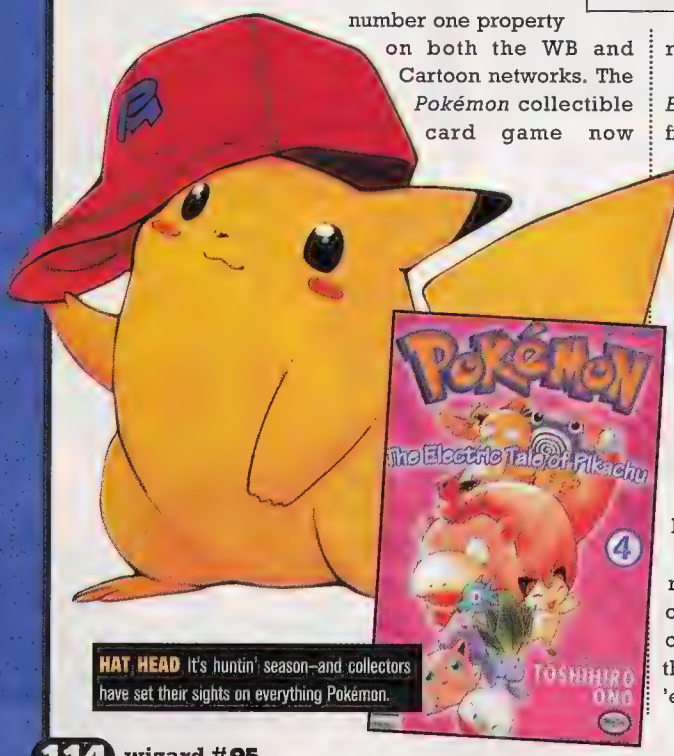
CLOSE QUARTERS DC's acquisition of WildStorm pumps it's market presence, but Marvel still sells more comics... just barely.

(Source: Diamond Comic Distribution. Figures represent unit sales for April 1999.)

And all of this drives demand for *Pokémon: The Electric Tale of Pikachu*, the debut Pokémon mini-series from Viz. The first printing of *Pikachu* #1 registered only 22,000 copies. But by the book's fifth printing, *Pikachu* #1 had sold over 100,000 copies. Repeated printings of subsequent *Pikachu* issues are also pushing six digits.

As Pokémon fever swells this summer, demand and back-issue prices can do little but go up. July will see promotional crossovers with *Animerica*, Viz's anime magazine. In August, Viz expects a wide-release graphic novel reprint of the four-issue *Pikachu* mini-series to sell 30,000 copies. And in September, Viz will blitz the market hard with four hardback volumes, each with original stories of Pokémon cast members Charmander, Squirtle, Bulbasaur and the ever-mousy Pikachu.

Heavy reprinting the likes of which we're seeing now typically drops the price of originals. But considering Pokémon's huge demand, it's likely collectors will still want rare first printings. Like the Pokémon themselves, collectors have gotta catch 'em all.



HAT HEAD It's huntin' season—and collectors have set their sights on everything Pokémon.

GAMERS FEAST AT "DINNER TABLE"

If you've ever been bummed because your dragon was turned into a canary, here's a book for you.

Knights of the Dinner Table is little-known in the world of comics. But it's well-loved by those who indulge in roleplaying games. *Knights* contains whimsical, jokey stories about a group of role-players in Muncie, Ind. constantly jabbing at the gamers themselves. One character, B.A., is a 30-year-old pizza delivery boy who lives at home. Only one player, Sara, seems to know that their roleplaying characters exist only on paper.

The monthly *Knights* series just hit #31 and sells about 17,000 copies per issue—more than two-thirds of those sales coming from outside the comic market. But when *Knights* #1 debuted, it sold only a humble 3,000 copies. Do the math, fanboy: Demand outweighs supply, so #1 runs you $25 today and anything up to around issue #10 is tough to find. Newcomers can try for early issues reprinted in three-issue compilations entitled *Knights: Bundles of Trouble*.

A final note: If you've seen *Knights* and you're wondering how anyone could like—to be honest—such amateurish art, you're not alone. David Kenzer, president of *Knights* publisher Kenzer and Co., says he doesn't try to pass the book off as having top artwork and that *Knights* readers don't mind. "I have a lot of respect for artists," he says, "but I personally believe comics are not about artwork; they never have been. When I was growing up, I had no idea whether Superman had great pecs or not. I only cared about what the story said."

Thousands of *Knights* readers seem to agree and they're gobbling it up.

FANS WANT MORE MOORE

Stand up and cheer to the blazing, recent return of writer Alan Moore, the man credited for a memorable run on *Swamp Thing*, and the ever-famous *Watchmen*. Moore's new America's Best Comics line, published through Wild Storm Productions, is creating new memories.

TOP 10 CREATORS

FAN FAVORITES

These are the creators the fans crave. Creators whose name on a cover sells the book. *Wizard's* Top Ten Creators lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey. Artists include pencilers and painters.

WRITERS

1. Kevin Smith
Clerks, Daredevil

2. Kurt Busiek
Iron Man, Avengers

3. Mark Waid
Captain America, Flash

4. Garth Ennis
Preacher, Hitman

5. Grant Morrison
JLA, The Invisibles

6. Dan Jurgens
Thor, Superman

7. Alan Davis
X-Men, Uncanny X-Men

8. Alan Moore
League of Ex. Gents

9. Paul Jenkins
Inhumans

10. Joe Kelly
Deadpool

ARTISTS

1. Alex Ross
Earth X

2. Adam Kubert
Uncanny X-Men

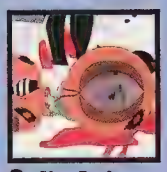
3. Joe Madureira
Battle Chasers

4. Michael Turner
Fathom

5. George Pérez
Avengers

6. Joe Quesada
Daredevil, Ash

7. J. Scott Campbell
Danger Girl



8. Alan Davis
X-Men

9. Jae Lee
Inhumans

10. John Romita Jr.
Thor, P.P.: Spider-Man

BURIED TREASURE

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THIS

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #441

Ah, those characters you *think* are throwaways...

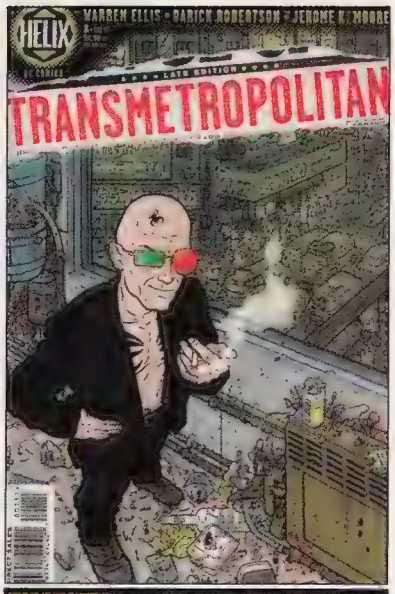
Amazing Spider-Man #441 contains the first appearance of spunky, 19-year-old Martha Frankin, a big Spidey fan who gains vast powers at the climax of "The Gathering of Five" (which starts in this very ish). Eventually she even masquerades as the wall-crawler for two months in the revamped Spidey titles. Not excited yet? Well try this: This spunky li'l red-head now swings as the new Spider-Woman, starring in her own title!

If the prior success of *Spider-Girl* is any indication, *Spider-Woman* could click. And you can grab this first appearance for chump change...but only if you hurry. ■ LP

PHOTOS: BUSIEK, KELLY, SMITH, KUBERT, MADUREIRA, ROSS, TURNER, WAID, QUESADA, PENCILS BY PAUL SCHWALLIE, MORRISON, MOORE BY BOB MARTIN, PÉREZ BY BOB SMITH, JURGENS, LEE, DAVIS BY WIZARD, JENKINS BY DEREK ROCHON, CAMPBELL BY JOHN W. MCDONOUGH, ENNIS PHOTO COURTESY OF DC COMICS

ABC's debut offering, *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, is already locked in as one of the sleeper hits of 1999. Issues #1 and #2 had initial orders of 37,000 and 29,000 respectively—peanuts compared to the buzz the book has generated. The first issue has already nudged up a buck in price and will likely go higher. The only thing that could hinder *League*'s success? A lagging production schedule that's likely to get worse before it gets better.

And *Tom Strong*, the most recent ABC offering, was released to rave fan reviews in April. Retailers report copies selling briskly. *Tom Strong* #1 debuted with a decent number of copies in circulation, so it'll take a while for the price to tick up. But all indications are that the line has too much momentum for it not to make gains.



DRAG KING Seems Ellis' books (like the one starring Spider Jeruselem, above) disappear in a puff of smoke.

ELLIS ON A ROLL

As long as we're talking creators, don't underestimate Warren Ellis, a writer who's drawing in fans by slowly moving *away* from the superhero vein. Ellis appeals to the over-the-top-loving audience that also goes for writer Garth Ennis (*Preacher*), but also gets fans who love political commentary.

Transmetropolitan, Ellis' wild, politically-bent future-dystopia Vertigo monthly, gains a little readership every issue and has consolidated a group of rock-solid loyalists. For this reason, November sees the release of a $90 statue of *Transmet*'s main character, journalist Spider Jerusalem. And despite reprints, early *Transmetropolitan* issues are still on the move up.

And don't pass up *Planetary*, Ellis' newest WildStorm work, which focuses on what happens *around* and *because of* superheroes. With a middling initial order of some 37,000 copies, *Planetary* #1 could be a sleeper; adjust your reality accordingly.

Wizard Price Guide Manager Lars Pearson is a sleeper. We wake him up just in time to make deadline.

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(609) 489-1199

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TOP 10 comics

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. These are the books ringing the registers this month...**

1 POKÉMON: THE ELECTRIC TALE OF PIKACHU #1

WRITER: Toshihiro Ono
ARTIST: Toshihiro Ono

Gather around the Poké-temple, kids. It's time to drop to one knee and worship Pikachu, for he is your yellow, pudgy god. We can only hope he shall be a benevolent ruler and provide a Charmander for every roasting spit and a Squirtle for every soup pot. Let us hope that we never feel the wrath of our all-powerful, all-wise king. Why? Because when Pikachu gets mad, he nips at your fingers. Ouchie! **LAST MONTH: 3**

2 WHAT IF...? (VOL. 2) #105

WRITERS: Tom DeFalco and Ron Frenz
ARTISTS: Ron Frenz and Bill Sienkiewicz

Man alive, collectors must be kickin' themselves. For decades, *What If...?* comics have been about as valuable as bird snot. But one li'l gal decides to put on one li'l Spidey costume, and all of a sudden, there's a *What If...?* that's so hot, it's off the scale. The first appearance of Spider-Girl in #105 is going for $30 and counting. Just goes to show you that sometimes bird snot's worth a second look. Go figure. **LAST MONTH: 2**

3 UNDERTAKER #1

WRITER: Beau Smith
ARTISTS: Manny Clark and Sandu Florea

He's crawling from the darkness to battle for your very soul! He's exploding onto comic pages across the country! He's got tons of really freaky tattoos! And he fights guys who wear socks on their hands. Weird, eh? Yeah, but no weirder than a guy who dresses up like a giant winged rat 'cause his parents got killed. **LAST MONTH: NOT RATED (N.R.)**

4 BATMAN: S.O.T.B. #83

WRITER: Bob Gale
ARTISTS: Alex Maleev and Wayne Faucher

It's the first appearance of the new Batgirl, it ties into that whole mondo-popular, super-cool "No Man's Land" story and each issue comes with a tasty cherry Poptart. One o' these fun facts is made up! Can you guess which one? Tee-hee! We're so clever! **LAST MONTH: 1**

5 DAREDEVIL #1

WRITER: Kevin Smith
ARTISTS: Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti

Joey the Q, Jimmy the P and Kevvy the S sure do know how to put together a blockbuster funnybook. Makes us wonder what would happen if they tackled *Archie*. Well, for one thing, Betty'd be planted in Riverdale Cemetery inside of a month and Veronica would be wearin' spandex. Cool. **LAST MONTH: 8**

6 LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN #1

WRITER: Alan Moore
ARTIST: Kevin O'Neill

Low print runs plus an acute case of Alan Moore Fever equals senses-shattering back market heat! And if Alan Moore Fever is anything like "Saturday Night Fever," pretty soon the whole country's gonna be sporting big-ass beards and crowding dance floors doing the "Moore-tusi." **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

7 INVISIBLES (VOL.1) #25

WRITER: Grant Morrison
ARTISTS: M. Buckingham and M. Pennington

Look away from the lava lamp, freaks. Your pet comic has made the chart. People are *finally* turning on to this wonky series and there's like zero copies of this issue around. Since more readers have been figuring out the same thing, there's even less copies to love. Why, it's almost like they're invisible! Heh. Sorry. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

8 TRANSMETROPOLITAN #1

WRITER: Warren Ellis
ARTISTS: Darick Robertson and Jerome K. Moore

Talk about your street cred! Here's a comic with ray guns that loosen your bowels, two-headed cats *and* a whole lotta smokin' goin' on. Smoking and bowel humor mean the "hip" quotient just keeps on climbing. Funny how that works. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

9 NIGHTWING #1

WRITER: Chuck Dixon
ARTISTS: Scott McDaniel and Karl Story

Our old buddy Nightwing has some serious staying power. In the entertainment biz, we call staying power "legs." He must get it from all his circus training. After all, if you have weak legs in the circus, you tend to plummet off trapezes and land skull-first in big piles o' elephant crap. That's to be avoided. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

10 BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER #1

WRITER: Andi Watson
ARTISTS: Joe Bennett and Rick Ketcham

Okay, so Buffy agrees to go to the prom with you. But first, you've got to stop off in the cemetery, dig up a coffin and put a stake through some demonic creature's heart. Would you risk getting bitten on the ass by some hellspawn for a smooch from the Buffster? Yeah, us too. We're pathetic. **LAST MONTH: 9**

THE HIGHEST-ORDERED BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF **APRIL**

TOP100

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff using data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors.

The team gets stranded in the past on the Skrull homeworld in *Uncanny* #369.

1. Uncanny X-Men #369 (Marvel)
2. X-Men #89 (Marvel)
3. Battle Chasers #6 (WildStorm/DC)
4. Spawn #85 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
5. Avengers #17 (Marvel)
6. Wolverine #139 (Marvel)
7. JLA #30 (DC)
8. Earth X #3 (Marvel)
9. Daredevil #8 (Marvel)
10. Spawn: The Dark Ages #2 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
11. Wolverine/Punisher: Revelation #1 (Marvel)
12. Amazing Spider-Man #6 (Marvel)
13. Darkness/Batman (Top Cow/Image)
14. Magneto Rex #2 (Marvel)
15. Fantastic Four #18 (Marvel)
16. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #6 (Marvel)
17. Thor #12 (Marvel)
18. Captain America #18 (Marvel)
19. Black Widow #1 (Marvel)
20. Avengers Forever #7 (Marvel)
21. Iron Man #17 (Marvel)
22. Gambit #5 (Marvel)
23. Mutant X #9 (Marvel)
24. Witchblade #31 (Top Cow/Image)
25. Tom Strong #1 (WildStorm/DC)
26. Hulk #3 (Marvel)
27. Spider-Man: Chapter One #8 (Marvel)
28. Fathom Swimsuit Special #1 (Top Cow/Image)
29. Batman #566 (DC)
30. X-Men Unlimited #23 (Marvel)
31. Generation X #52 (Marvel)
32. X-Force #91 (Marvel)
33. Aria #4 (Avalon Studios/Image)
34. Amazing Spider-Man 1999 (Marvel)
35. Green Lantern #113 (DC)
36. Detective Comics #733 (DC)
37. Titans #4 (DC)
38. Inhumans #8 (Marvel)
39. Galactus: The Devourer #1 (Marvel)
40. Cable #68 (Marvel)
41. Divine Right #10 (WildStorm/DC)
42. Thunderbolts #27 (Marvel)
43. X-Man #52 (Marvel)
44. Tales of the Witchblade #7 (Top Cow/Image)
45. Buffy the Vampire Slayer #8 (Dark Horse)
46. Spider-Girl #9 (Marvel)
47. Preacher #50 (Vertigo/DC)
48. Nightwing #32 (DC)
49. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #86 (DC)
50. Dawn: Return of the Goddess #1 (Sirius)
51. KISS: The Psycho Circus #19 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
52. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #118 (DC)
53. Lady Pendragon: Dragon Blade #1 (Image)
54. Superman #145 (DC)
55. Darkchylde: The Legacy #3 (WildStorm/DC)
56. Adventures of Superman #568 (DC)
57. Superman: The Man of Steel #89 (DC)
58. Black Panther #8 (Marvel)
59. Flash #149 (DC)
60. Batman & Superman: World's Finest #3 (DC)
61. Nova #2 (Marvel)
62. Gen^{13} #40 (WildStorm/DC)
63. Young Justice #9 (DC)
64. Star Wars: Boba Fett—Enemy of the Empire #4 (D.H.)
65. Deadpool #29 (Marvel)
66. Star Wars: Vader's Quest #3 (Dark Horse)
67. Star Wars #5 (Dark Horse)
68. Robin #65 (DC)
69. Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty #10 (Marvel)
70. Star Wars: Crimson Empire II #6 (Dark Horse)
71. Undertaker #2 (Chaos!)
72. Authority #2 (WildStorm/DC)
73. Planetary #3 (WildStorm/DC)
74. Allies #1 (Awesome)
75. Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Spike & Dru (Dark Horse)
76. Flinch #1 (Vertigo/DC)
77. Catwoman #69 (DC)
78. A-Next #9 (Marvel)
79. Webspinners: Tales of Spider-Man #6 (Marvel)
80. Green Lantern 80-Page Giant #2 (DC)
81. Supergirl #33 (DC)
82. Spirit of the Tao #9 (Top Cow/Image)
83. The Crow #3 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
84. Azrael: Agent of the Bat #53 (DC)
85. Pokémon Vol. 2: Pikachu Shocks Back #2 (Viz)
86. Batman: Book of the Dead #1 (DC)
87. The Tenth: Black Embrace #3 (Image)
88. J2 #9 (Marvel)
89. Wonder Woman #145 (DC)
90. Superman 80-Page Giant #2 (DC)
91. Starman #54 (DC)
92. Martian Manhunter #7 (DC)
93. Superboy #63 (DC)
94. Hourman #3 (DC)
95. Birds of Prey #6 (DC)
96. Legends of the DC Universe #17 (DC, duh)
97. Batman: Book of Shadows (DC)
98. Batman Beyond #4 (DC)
99. Gen^{13}: Going West (WildStorm/DC)
100. Slingers #7 (Marvel)

TOP 100 HIGHLIGHTS

KNIGHTS SEIZE THE DAY

Wolverine/Punisher: Revelation #1 & Black Widow #1 (Nos. 11, 19)

The Marvel Knights gang continues to slice and punish the competition with their second- and third-highest rankings yet, trailing only last year's *Daredevil* #1, which hit No. 10. Fan-fave artist Pat Lee helped *Wolverine/Punisher* along, while new girl on the block Devin Grayson brought fans of her writing to *Black Widow*. As the Marvel Knights year winds down, the line stands stronger than ever.

Tom Strong #1 (No. 25)

Watchmen writer Alan Moore is back and back *Strong*. Feeding off Moore's acclaimed and underordered *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, the unproven *Tom Strong* pumped iron to rank No. 25. Course, a painted cover by Alex Ross and a one-in-four variant by series artist Chris Sprouse don't hurt, neither.

Batman books (Nos. 29, 36, 49, 52)

Ever since the year-long "No Man's Land" started in January, the core Bat-books have steadily gained a few thousand each month. And finally, more fans are reading *all* of the books, since the gap between *Batman* and the low-tier *Legends of the Dark Knight* tightened from 35 slots last month to 23 this go-'round.

Galactus: The Devourer #1 (No. 39)

No doubt about it: Fans dig Galactus, the world-chewing guy with the funky hat. In fact, if these numbers are any indication, they're *starved* for him. Promises to resolve lingering Galactus questions plus strong promotion by Marvel led to a sleeper hit.

Dawn: Return of the Goddess #1 (No. 50)

Three words: Way too low. For a Sirius title to rank No. 50 is impressive. But when it's the one and only Joseph Michael Linsner who's doin' the art–and the book only hits at #50!–well, you've got a book that's frighteningly underordered. You've been warned.

Flinch #1 (No. 76)

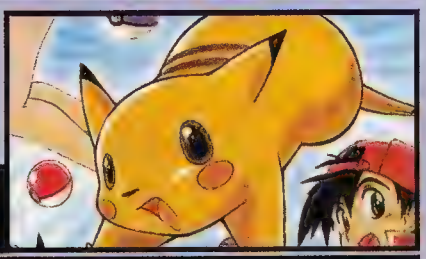
Flinch raised our eyebrows by doing so well. It's a Vertigo book, and an anthology of short stories. Traditionally, neither sell all too well. Hey, what's this? A story in #1 penciled by WildStorm founder Jim Lee? Okay, that explains it all.

Pokémon Vol. 2: Pikachu Shocks Back #2 (No. 85)

Last month, *Pikachu Shocks Back* #1 came in at No. 97. Now, like a salmon swimming upstream, *PSB* #2 moves up 12 places as Pokémon fever grows. It's incredibly rare to see a #2 defy gravity like this, but if anyone can do it, it's cute li'l Pikachu.

CLOSE-UP LOOK

Break it on down now! Here's a look at the top-selling books in a couple categories, with their overall Diamond Comic Distributors "Top 300" rankings in parentheses.



SHOCKING! Okay, maybe not. It's no big surprise that electric mouse Pikachu leads the 'toon hit parade.

TOP 10 CARTOON SPINOFF BOOKS

1. Pokémon Vol. 2: Pikachu Shocks Back #2 (Viz, No. 85)
2. Batman Beyond #4 (DC, No. 98)
3. Sailor Moon #7 (Mixx, No. 109)
4. Batman: The Gotham Adventures #13 (DC, No. 113)
5. Simpsons Comics #42 (Bongo, No. 118)
6. Dragonball Z Part Two #5 (Viz, No. 141)
7. Dragonball Part Two #2 (Viz, No. 147)
8. Gunsmith Cats: Bean Bandit #4 (Dark Horse, No. 151)
9. Ranma 1/2 Part 8 #1 (Viz, No. 158)
10. Neon Genesis Evangelion Book Four #3 (Viz, No. 162)

BOTTOM 10 BOOKS

291. Wild Women #1 (AC Comics)
292. Double Impact Alive #2 (Another Bad Creation)
293. Vamperotica Gallery Nude #1 (Brainstorm)
294. Johnny Comet #1 (ACG)
295. Vamperotica Gallery #1 (Brainstorm) [Hey, the "nude" sold better. Go figger!]
296. Giant Shanda Animal #4 (Shanda Fantasy Arts, of course)
297. Robyn of Sherwood #3 (Caliber)
298. Gold Digger Mangazine Special (Antarctic Press)
299. Double Impact Spring Special #1 (Another Bad Creation)
300. Poe #17 (Sirius)

LOOKING BACK

What topped the charts FIVE YEARS AGO?

1. X-Men #35 (Marvel)
2. Uncanny X-Men #315 (Marvel)
3. Violator #2 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
4. Wolverine #84 (Marvel)
5. Pitt #5 (Full Bleed/Image)
6. Gen^{13} #5 (WildStorm/Image)
7. Saban's Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers #1 (Hamilton)
8. X-Force #37 (Marvel)
9. Batman/Punisher: Lake of Fire (DC)
10. Batman #510 (DC)

GO, GO...NOWHERE! The Power Rangers took off in '94, but when their 15 minutes of fame were up, so was this book.

Powered by a "Power Rangers" TV show and a billion rabid 6-year-olds, *Power Rangers* #1 from Hamilton Comics (Who?) clobbered most of the competition for a month. Of course, the plug was quickly pulled on this power. Hamilton's series lasted a mere six issues as kids grew up and turned their attention to hyper-violent video games and the like. Today's 6-year-olds? Last we checked, they were all watching "Pokémon."

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For travel and hotel information, call Tzell Travel at 800-865-9038 ext. 666.

*With the purchase of an adult ticket.

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MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

HOW TO USE THE PRICE GUIDE

The **WIZARD** guide contains the most accurate and up-to-minute comic book prices available on the planet. To ensure that our values are as timely as possible, we constantly communicate with our ever-expanding network of comic book retailers and regularly send scouts to check prices in stores and at shows throughout the country. Keep in mind that the Price Guide is only a guide; prices may vary depending on the local availability and popularity of a title.

IT'S EASY... and best of all, you can learn at home. The price guide is arranged alphabetically by title. Listings for trade paperbacks, annuals, one-shots and graphic novels are found after the regular listing for a title, and are likewise listed alphabetically. When a title has been used several times for different series, like *Legion of Super-Heroes* or even *Fantastic Four*, we list all series under that title chronologically.

When a book has changed in value since last month's listing, it's shaded by either a red or blue bar. If the comic has risen in value, it's marked by a red bar. If it has fallen in value, it's marked by a blue bar. Every new issue and/or title listing is marked by a green bar. A yellow bar indicates an issue that is experiencing heavy market trading activity, but has not changed in value since last issue. See? Easy as pie. (And we love pie.)

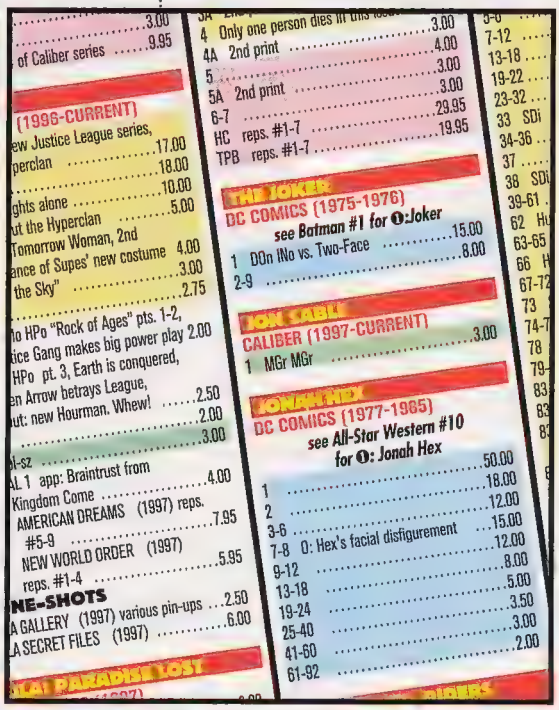
ALPHABETIZING

After skipping articles "A," "An," and "The" at the beginning of a title, alphabetization is word by word, not letter by letter. So, "The Amazing Spider-Man" is listed under "Amazing," and "The Astonishing X-Men" is listed under "Astonishing;" "Batman: Sword of Azrael" comes before "Batman: The Animated Movie" because we include the article "The" in alphabetizing when it occurs as an interior part of the title. Using the one-word-at-a-time approach, all titles starting with the word "Blood," including "Blood Syndicate," are used up before we go on to titles such as "Bloodfire/Hellina" and "Bloodshot." Abbreviations such as "Dr." will be found before titles starting with "Dragon" but after titles starting with "Doctor." Numeric titles such as "2099 A.D." will be mixed in alphabetically as if the numeral were spelled out as "Two thousand ninety-nine."

REFERENCES

SECRET DECODER RING

- ❶ .....First Appearance of
- anniv .....Anniversary issue
- A .....Appearance
- B .....Begin stories with
- C .....Cameo that pre-dates ❶
- cvr.....Cover
- D .....Death/Destruction of
- GN.....Graphic Novel
- HC .....Hardcover
- IR .....Identity revealed
- J .....Joins
- L .....Last story with
- M.....Married
- O .....Origin
- p .....part #
- PF .....Prestige Format
- Q .....Quits
- R .....Return of
- SC .....Softcover
- sz .....Size
- TPB.....Trade Paperback
- w/ .....With
- w/o .....Without



MAKING THE GRADE

All prices listed in this guide are for Near Mint (NM) condition. When your comic isn't Near Mint, you can compute the price based on the percentages shown to the left. Now, keep in mind that one person's Mint is another's Near Mint. And many things can factor into grading a comic's value: its age, the supply and demand for the various grades, retailer location, local availability of a title, its current popularity, and most importantly, what specific condition the comic is in. "Dammit, Jim, I'm a doctor, not a comic grader!" Hey, relax. We'll not only show you how to use this price guide, but how to grade your comics too. Just read along and before you know it, you'll be able to dazzle your dates with all sorts of hip comic lingo.

It might help if you grade comics on a 10-point scale, with 10 being perfect and 1 being lousy.

MINT (M): An almost perfect 9.8 to 10 on a 10-point scale! ¡Un libro muy guapo! To be Mint, a comic must appear absolutely like the day it was printed, with no nicks, dings or creases. It's gotta be clean as a whistle. Corners are perfectly sharp without a tear or shred, the colors are crystal clear, the cover gloss is still there and even the friggin' staples are perfect. Many comics produced today fall short of Mint standards. Remember, no imperfections may be allowed in a Mint comic.
Mint comics fetch 125-150% of price listed. Comics after 1970 in Mint should be priced at the Near Mint price, since Mint copies are not unusual for comics after 1970.

NEAR MINT (NM): A 9 on a 10-point scale. Just a notch or two below perfect. It might appear to be Mint, but upon inspection, tiny flaws are seen. The gloss and color are outstanding. Comics in this condition should do any collection proud, unless you're some weird, anal comic perfectionist. All prices in this guide are for Near Mint copies, which are 100 percent of guide listings.

VERY FINE (VF): A 7 on a scale of 10. This is clean and sharp in every way and at first glance may appear Near Mint. At closer range, however, you'll notice minor signs of use. VF comics are 70 percent of guide listings (75-80% for pre-1970 books).

FINE-VERY FINE (FVF): A 6 outta 10. Fine-Very Fine books are above-average, clean, bright copies lacking the crispness associated with VF. Pages may be slightly yellow, but not brown or brittle. Several tiny stress lines along the spine or covers may be expected, and several tiny color flakes are permitted. No subscription creases or spine rolls are allowed. Corners may be slightly rounded, but great cover gloss remains. Fine-Very Fine books go for 50 percent of price guide listings.

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VERY GOOD (VG): A whopping 3 out of 10. Average, at best. Very Good comics appear used, but not abused. They have creases and minor tears. Very Good books go for 15-25 percent of guide listings.

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C.B.I.Q.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART...

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

Funyuns! With the weather turnin' warm and the end of school in sight, it be time for the "all teen angst" edition of the C.B.I.Q. This month, we'll be grading you against the hottest babes from teen TV. The higher the babe factor, the higher your score.

SCORE	RANK
0	*Joey from "Dawson's Creek"*
1-5	*Joey from "Dawson's Creek" in a really soft, fuzzy sweater*
6-10	*Joey from "Dawson's Creek" in a giant vat of baked beans*
11	*Two Joeys, two sweaters, one vat o' beans*

1 Holy unsafe sex, Batman! Robin's girlfriend, the Spoiler, done got herself knocked up. Who did the deed?
A) Robin, the Boy Wonder
B) Alfred, the Geriatric Wonder
C) Nameless Ex-Boyfriend, the Trojanless Wonder
D) Ace, the Cross-Species Wonder

2 Oxycute 'em! The X-Men's Marrow suffers from what date-alienating skin disorder?
A) Pores that secrete an oily goo whenever she gets excited
B) Snake-like hairs growing on her back and legs
C) Bones jutting out of her skin at crazy angles
D) A birthmark in the shape of Joel Schumacher's head. That blinks.

3 Which ex-teen sidekick enjoyed shootin' heroin almost as much as he did bustin' heads?
A) Speedy (c'mon...the name's a dead giveaway)
B) Matter-Eater Lad
C) Green Goblin II
D) André "Magic" Shell, Prince of 'Shrooms

4 In comics, the only certainty is taxes. Which superhero youngster has defied bad comic storytelling and actually stayed dead?
A) Warpath
B) Meltdown
C) Star-Spangled Kid
D) Bucky (remember comics' Golden Rule #274: "Only Bucky stays dead!")

5 Whoo-hoo, underage drinking! Name the teen heartthrob who can't stop poundin' brewskis, no matter how tanked she gets!
A) Siryn
B) Boom Boom
C) Wonder Girl
D) Big 'n' Sloppy Mama Jalopy, home of the 300-pound bagpipe

6 Eddie McDonough–y'know, Hornet from *Slingers*–loves to lose himself in his costumed superhero identity because:
A) Blind since birth, the Hornet armor allows him to see.
B) He's insecure about his looks and hides them behind the Hornet mask.
C) The Hornet armor controls his palsy.
D) The automatic waste-removal system in the suit feels great!

7 Why does new Avengers recruit Justice have such a hard time hanging with Earth's Mightiest Heroes?
A) New, assless costumes designed by the Wasp kinda "creep him out."
B) Being the only mutant on the team makes him feel ostracized and alone.
C) He feels like he doesn't belong with the "cool kids."
D) He's still embarrassed from when he was caught checking to see if Ultron had bothered to make the Vision a "li'l synthezoid."

8 Talk about not fitting in...! The orphaned, alternate-reality mutant known as X-Man also has one more strike against him. That would be...
A) Anytime he does cool stuff with his powers that might impress the chicks, it brings him closer to dying.
B) A side effect of his power is to instill fear in those around him, making it impossible for anyone to feel love towards him.
C) He sweats blood.
D) His one-inch wonder.

9 Speech impediments are funny as long as it's not you who's got one. From which impediment does young Billy Batson, a.k.a. Captain Marvel, suffer?
A) Stuttering
B) Tourette's
C) A lisp
D) Writers who seem stuck in the '50s and make him say things like "Holy Moley." Ugh.

10 Spider-Girl, the future daughter of Spider-Man, has a crush on one of her school's football players. Why does their love seem doomed?
A) His name is Normie Osborn...and he's the grandson of Norman Osborn, the original Green Goblin.
B) Their respective circles of friends don't click.
C) She's not part of his rich, cultured world.
D) He weighs over 300 pounds and would crush her with his gelatinous, pockmarked belly.

11 Puberty, social cliques, women...what's the most confusing thing Superboy has ever had to deal with?
A) Homework, where your brain is always in over its head
B) Keggers, where your liver is always in over its head
C) Dating, where the guys are always in over their heads
D) Hypertime, where the fans are always in over their heads

ANSWERS

Candy-asses can peek on the next page if this is too tough...

BULLPEN LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Wizard defeated!

It started with the Saran Wrapping of the *ToyFare* offices, *Wizard*'s sister toy magazine. Then, over 1,000 photocopied faces of the *Wizard* Bullpenners were found plastered over the *ToyFare* walls. After weeks of small attacks and counterattacks too trivial to go into here, *ToyFare* launched a monster counterstrike by first cobwebbing the *Wizard* Bullpen with hundreds of yards of string and later filling it with close to 1,000 balloons. With the score standing at 2-2 for months, it was *ToyFare* that pulled ahead as this past April 1, hundreds of glasses of water–all filled to the brim–lined every square inch of the *Wizard* Bullpen, with a select few filled with blue Kool-Aid spelling out "April Fool's" to the open-mawed *Wizard* team.

"My biggest reaction?" remarked newest *Wizard* recruit Associate Editor Justin Jones. "I really had to resist the urge to shove random passers-by into it." Managing Editor Andrew Kardon had this to say: "Impressive? Yeah. That's why I don't think *ToyFare* did it. They're not good enough to think of this."

"What I think Andrew meant to say," smiled *ToyFare* Staff Writer Tom Root, "is that *Wizard* might as well bend over and start walking on all fours, since they're now permanent catchers."

As of press time, nothing has imploded in the *ToyFare* Bullpen.

THEY FOOLED US! Water water everywhere, and not a drop to drink.

TOP 10 last-day-of-school pranks at the Xavier Academy

10 Walk by Professor X, grasp the sides of your face, fall to your knees and scream, "Get out of my head, GET OUT OF MY HEAD!!"
9 Put Nair in Beast's shampoo, then flush the toilet so he has no cold water. Double whammy!
8 Lock Artie and Leech in a locker, toss in a couple of sandwiches, and let their near-dead little bodies be a surprise find for next semester's students.
7 Get Gambit all liquored up, dress him like Magneto, and push him down the stairs into a brooding Wolverine.
6 Go to church, have Husk jump up in the middle of services and yell "Satan is the true Lord!" and then rip off all her skin. Lotsa laughs.
5 Using strobe lights and a fog machine, trick classmates into believing Maggott has been possessed by the Phoenix force. Assist the Shi'ar militia in destroying him.
4 Dial time/weather/temperature, tell Jubilee it's her parents, and hand her the phone.
3 Replace the ruby quartz in Cyclops' visor with Plexiglas and red cellophane. Duck.
2 Buy Professor X's favorite Chardonnay, then hang it from a rope just out of his reach.
1 Throw a blanket over Cannonball's head, then beat him unconscious with bars of soap in socks. When he wakes up, yell "Gotcha!"

C.B.I.Q. answers...

1. C 2. C 3. A 4. D 5. A 6. C 7. C 8. A 9. D 10. B 11. D

ONE OF THE DAMNED

DOING HARD TIME

Arlene So DESIGNER

WHY WE PAY HER "To keep Design Manager Steve Blackwell from going insane and to make the *Wizard* pages all pretty. I mainly work on features and house ads for all of Wizard Entertainment's magazines."

BEST OUT-OF-CONTEXT QUOTE "I want something I can play with in my mouth." (In reference to a peppermint candy someone was eating.)

MOST BIZARRE *WIZARD* MOMENT "After Senior Staff Writer Jim McLauchlin came back from a San Diego Comic Convention, I innocently asked him how the convention went. Jim frantically screamed, 'I DID NOT HAVE CONVENTION SEX, OKAY?!?' Wide-eyed and speechless, I ran. Really fast."

PHOTOS: PAUL SCURALDI

TIME TRAVEL by RUSSELL LISSAU AND JOHN B. LACEY

ACTION PACKED

Superman soared into pop culture 61 years ago in 'Action Comics' #1

If you've never heard of Superman, you must be from another planet.

The first modern superhero, the Man of Steel debuted in *Action Comics* #1, cover dated June 1938, and has flown into the American pop culture consciousness. Heck, even your grandmother knows the story of the alien baby sent to Earth from a dying planet who grew up to be mild-mannered reporter Clark Kent and now fights for truth, justice and the American way in blue tights and a red cape.

Julius Schwartz thinks he knows why Superman joined icons like Mickey Mouse and Coca-Cola: He represents the hopes of the era in which he was born. "People were in the throes of the Depression," the Superman editor during the '70s and early '80s remembers. "Things were tough, and he gave hope that things could be better."

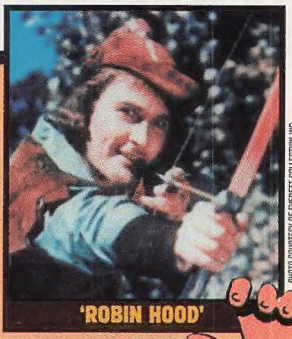
Superman sprang from the minds of two guys from Cleveland, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. The two youths wanted to create a hero to cash in on the budding comic book business and shopped around their original hero for years. "All this time we really felt that we had something that was very different, something that the public really would take to its heart," Siegel had been quoted as saying. Finally, National Periodicals (now DC Comics) agreed to print the strip, and a pop culture phenomenon was born: By 1941, Superman had spawned a second comic title (the first title to bear a character's name), a cartoon series, puzzles, paint sets, dolls, statues, books, games, a hit radio show, and a newspaper strip—not to mention a host of comic book imitators.

The American public has never forgotten Superman over the last six decades, as the comic book business grew into a multimillion-dollar industry. The most recent example of the power of Superman came in November 1992, when the Man of Steel died at the hands of the killing machine Doomsday. Lines spanned out the doors of comic stores as both fans and the average customer wanted to read the tragedy. And the mass-media hype steamrolled right through until his resurrection in the summer of 1993. Supes' most recent highlights sprung from the mind of painter Alex Ross; 1996's *Kingdom Come* series starred an aging, cynical Superman in a dark future, and in 1998's *Superman: Peace on Earth*, Krypton's last survivor battles world hunger. "He is the hero from which all others come," Ross says. "There is no one more important."

DATELINE

JUNE 1938

"The Adventures of Robin Hood" targeted the wallets of both rich *and* poor theatergoers...Since most folks didn't own a TV in '38, they listened to the radio show **"The Shadow,"** starring Orson Welles as the eerie crimefighter...**Benny Goodman** ruled the American pop music charts with his big band bombast...The **minimum wage law** is enacted and set at 40 cents an hour.



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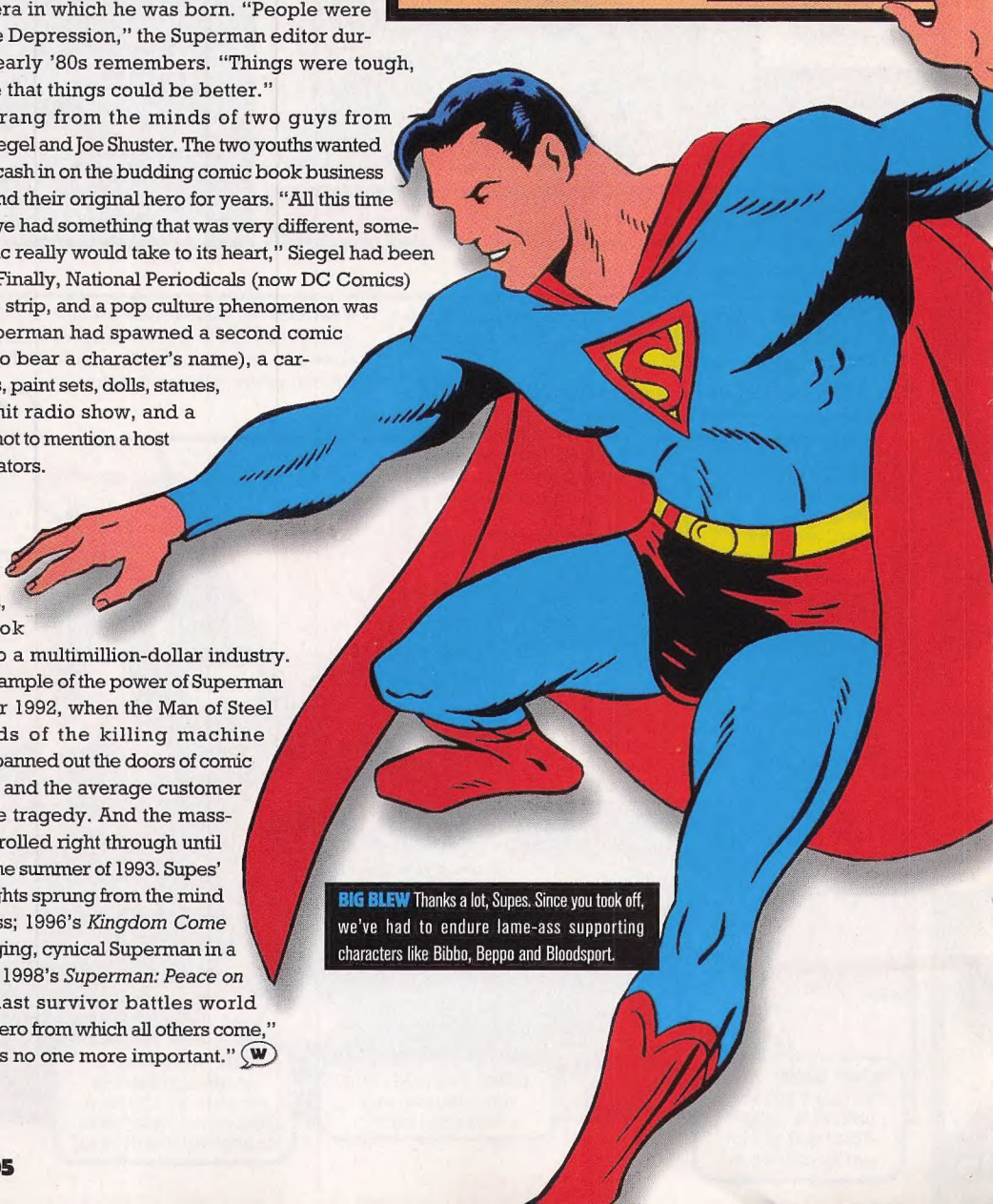

BIG BLEW Thanks a lot, Supes. Since you took off, we've had to endure lame-ass supporting characters like Bibbo, Beppo and Bloodsport.

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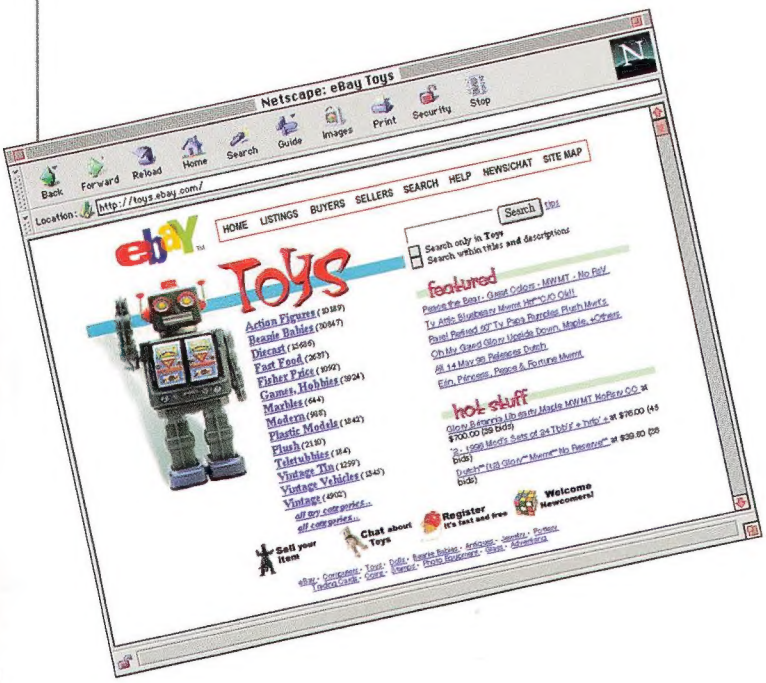

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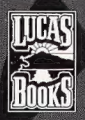

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